

WALSINGHAM;

OR,

THE PUPIL OF NATURE

A DOMESTIC STORY.

BY

MARY ROBINSON,

AUTHOR OF ANGELINA—HUBERT DE SEVRAC—THE
WIDOW—VANCENZA, &c. &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

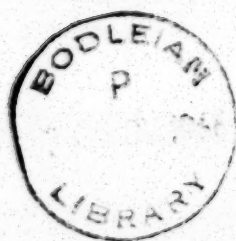
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WALSINGHAM;

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CHAP. I.

IT was not till I laid my head upon my pillow that I began to reflect on my new embarrassments. I slept but little, and my short slumbers were broken by a thousand visionary evils, adding their appalling shadows to the dreadful realities of affliction. I rose early, and again consulted Mr. Optic: he advised me to remain patiently at his house until some decisive intelligence should reach me respecting my relations, or some opportunity present itself which might place me in the road to more prosperous fortune. This restriction was painful to my feelings, which were too strongly awakened by curiosity to remain placid under the conviction that Isabella was so near me. I resolved to conceal myself during the day, but to employ the early part of every night in a research, which interested my heart far more than the dread of personal captivity.

Two days I vanquished my propensity, but on the third, at the dusk of the evening, I once more faltered forth—not like the famed knight of La Mancha

—not to display my prowess in vanquishing an harmless windmill—but in evading the terrific hosts of that perpetually grinding law, which mixes the pure grain of oppressed honesty with the coarse chaff of fraud and villany ; and, by incessant and indefatigable labour, sets reason, humanity, and justice at defiance.

I had scarcely proceeded the length of a street towards the west end of the town, where I purposed making inquiries after the health of Miss Woodford, when a thunder-storm overtook me with such rapidity, that every coach was called from the nearest stand, and the rain pouring a deluge, I had no resource left but that of taking shelter under a gateway. I was not the only storm-driven refugee ; the spot was thronged with pedestrians of various descriptions ;—nymphs of the band-box, shivering beneath their shower-drenched habiliments ; and venerable scouts, who are ever on the watch like the owls of twilight, and whose bosoms glow with phosphoric flames, snatched from the downcast eyes of modest beauty.

Among the variety of motley figures whom pelt-ing necessity had drawn together, I observed a couple deeply engaged in conversation. The man was placed in shadow, and the idol of his devotion was tricked out in all the finery of vulgar allurements. The innamorato vowed adoration to her beauty, and the nymph, after some feigned scruples, consented that he should attend her to her lodgings. The dialogue had amused the surrounding spectators : the desperate gallantry of the hero, and the artful capitulation of the heroine, concluded by his stopping a stray coach at that moment, like the adventurous knight, in quest of a fair ; and the amiable couple were just stepping into it when I discovered the features of my friend of the rostrum, the conscientious landlord of Clerkenwell. I could not let the delightful moment
of

of retaliation escape me, but, whispering in his ear, "Now who canters down the broad road of perdition?" arrested his erring steps, and he staggered back to the gateway in evident consternation.

But where was the spirit-chastened look; the puritanical tone of devout exhortation? Where the rusty, shabby suit of fables, emblem of the deep mourning of a contrite heart? Where the tresses falling into lanky uniformity, and mocking the profane custom of frizzing, pinching, scenting, and powdering?—Alas! they had all vanished; while the little god of the twanging bow had decked the hypocritical apostate in a pair of neat half boots, a scanty, long-backed, short-skirted, narrow-collared, little great coat, which hung round his lean form like his grandmother's winter cardinal; to which fashion had added a bludgeon two feet long, and a high-crowned hat, which would have concealed the features of Guy Vaux in his expedition, no less perilous than that which the arch impostor then meditated.

The only chance of escaping the disgrace, which would attend his exposure, seemed that of wholly denying his calling; but unluckily a second spectator in the throng identifying his person, the shouts and hisses became universal. The multitude groaned in the spirit; but it was the spirit of indignation. The affrighted Camellion swore and blustered, menaced me with his bludgeon, and at length in the vehemence of his wrath, aimed a blow at my head. I returned it; a ring was instantly made, the metamorphosed preacher of piety and peace stripped off his outward garb, and the onset commenced with scientific precision.

A gentleman in the circle held the coat and waistcoat of my antagonist, and we had scarcely gone one round, when something dropped from the pocket of the latter. The courage of the pugilistic cham-

pion at once deserted him, and, without assigning any reason for giving in, he darted through the circle and ran; the mob shouting, and I laughing immoderately. In a few minutes I discovered that the object, which had struck terror to the soul of the impostor, was nothing less than my own lamented pocket-book, purloined, in the scene of Mr. M^rArthur's distress, by the meek partner of the persecuting landlord. On opening the little treasury, which when I lost it contained no less than three hundred pounds, I found that only one hundred and fifty remained; the rest having been laid out in decorating the honest pair for their *debut* in the circle of St. James's.

After requesting the attendance of two witnesses who had seen the pocket-book fall to the ground, we entered the hackney-coach, which was still in waiting, and hastened to the house of the impostor. But he had decamped early on the preceding morning, after selling his goods and chattels to an appraiser, and humanely turning Mademoiselle de Beaumont into the street, to seek for shelter in the abode of some more benevolent protector.

We now repaired to Mr. Optic's, and very fortunately he corroborated my testimony respecting the pocket-book, having seen it on my table while I resided at Mrs. Woodford's. The lock was remarkable, being engraved with Isabella's initials, and the motto *gage d'amitie* channelled round them: it was a gift of friendship bestowed by Miss Hanbury, and far more valuable to me than all the treasure it could ever encompass.

Once more in possession of a small sum, I hastened to Mrs. Woodford's, in the hope of finding her, and of repaying my pecuniary obligation: but my disappointment was infinite, when the servant informed me that she still remained with Lady Ken-carth; and that Miss Woodford had that evening set out to join them, intending to pass a few days with her.

her sick relation. My good fortune was still darkened by the gloom of regret, while I reflected on the evils that might again assail Mademoiselle de Beaumont : and fate seemed to whisper, that there was no prospect of repose for me, while there existed one wretched being in the whole circle of my acquaintance.

Mr. Otic being absent from home on my return to his house, I employed a vacant hour in collecting, and thus arranging my sentiments on the subject.

In this vain, busy world, where the good and the gay,
By affliction and folly wing moments away :
Where the false are respected, the virtuous betray'd,
Where wisdom lies in dishonour, and genius in shade :
With a fearful sickn'd mind all changes I see,
For the world, the base world, has no pleasure for me.

In cities, where wealth loads the coffers of pride ;
Where talent and form w are ever ally'd ;
Where dulness is worshipp'd, and wisdom despis'd ;
Where none but the empty and venal are priz'd :
All scenes, with disgust and abhorrence I see,
For the world has no corner of comfort for me !

While pale Asiatics, encircled with gold,
The sons of misfortune indignant behold,
While the tithe-pamper'd churchman reviles at the poor,
As the lorn sinking traveller faints at his door ;
While religion dares sanction oppression's decree,
O ! keep such hard bosoms, such monsters from me !

While the flame of a patriot expires in the breast,
With ribbands and tinsel, and trippery drest ;
While the proud mock the children of want and of care ;
Give a sneer for each sigh, and a smile for each pray'r :
Though they triumph a day—a short day it must be :
Heaven keep such cold tyrants, O ! keep them from me.

While the lawyer still lives by the anguish of hearts ;
While he wrings the wrong'd bosom, and thrives as it smarts :
While he grasps the last guinea from poverty's heir ;
While he revels in splendour which rose from despair ;
While the tricks of his office our scourges must be,
Ah ! keep the shrewd knave, and his quibbles from me.

O! Earth! then vile Earth! how I tremble to trace
 The anguish that hourly arguments for thy race!
 How I turn from the work while I honour the best;
 The enlighten'd alone; and the venal detest:
 And alas! with what joy to the grave would I flee,
 Since the world, the base world! has no pleasure for me!

CHAP. II.

TWO days had passed, when Mrs. Woodford and her daughter returned to town; I paid them a visit immediately on their arrival, and requested permission to arrange my pecuniary obligations: but Mrs. Woodford would not hear me mention the subject. She expressed herself as sufficiently gratified in having been of service to me; and commanded, if I valued her friendship, an eternal silence on the subject in future.

Amelia evidently laboured under an unconquerable depression of spirits; her cheek was pale, and her countenance the melancholy index of a mind heavily charged with affliction. Mrs. Woodford only quitted the room for a few minutes, during the evening; but those few afforded Amelia an opportunity of disclosing a world of anticipated sorrow. "Walsingham!" said she, with a quivering lip, and eyes suffused with tears, "in another week I shall be obliged to relinquish every hope of happiness—I shall be the wife of ——" Here she suddenly paused: "but," continued she, after a conflict of a few moments, "you must not witness my sacrifice; you must not behold the agony it will inflict, on a heart that would not be able to sustain the trial. I conjure you to see me no more. There are reasons which will render your absence necessary to my future peace of mind. I have this day received a letter, which decides my fate, and renders you the only being upon earth, from whom I must separate for ever!"

"Must

"Must separate!" repeated I; "who shall compel you?"

"Reason, honour, gratitude, unite to command your absence," replied Miss Woodford. The word gratitude stung my pride, and I briefly answered, "Your commands shall be obeyed."

"Oh God!" exclaimed Amelia, "what a moment is this? How shall I fulfil those solemn vows which custom and religion will compel me to make; but which my truant heart will every moment shrink from? Shall I, so attached, so compelled, be culpable, if I kneel at the altar with a bosom conscious of falsehood; and half resolved to hate the very object whom I there promise to love, to honour?"

I knew not how to answer her. Beautiful and interesting as she appeared at that moment, I could not offer her an honourable union; and I shuddered at the idea of destroying a gentle, fascinated girl, whose merit as far surpassed my pretensions, as her beauty did that of every other woman,—excepting Isabella. After waiting some time, and finding me silent, she continued: "The idol to whom you devote your thoughts, for whom you pass a life of weary anguish, is already married."

"Married! Almighty God! Is Isabella married?" exclaimed I, with a voice of frantic despair.

"Pardon me, unhappy Walsingham," continued Miss Woodford, "if I am the unwelcome messenger of the fatal secret; but the object of your attention at Mrs. Heartwell's, is the wife of Sir Sidney Aubrey. I have been indefatigable in my inquiries, and the result of them is the dreadful confirmation of your despair. Think of her no more."

"Not think of her!" cried I, in an agony of frenzy; "I will think of her, and I will see her: she shall not triumph; her lover, her seducer, her—Oh! perdition seize the word! her *husband*, shall not possess her long! Never, never will I rest

till I have found them! While I had hope, there was yet a dawn of happiness in store for me: but the fiat of despair is conclusive, and one of us shall perish."

"You will not find her," said Amelia; "whither would you seek her?"

"Whither? In all her haunts of dissipation," said I; "at every place of public entertainment. The crowds of cities and the solitudes of mountains shall be explored. Oh, Amelia! you know not how I loved her! how I doted on this vain, capricious, barbarous Isabella!" Mrs. Woodford interrupted the conversation, and in a few minutes I departed in a fever of mind little short of madness.

On the following morning I hired a lodging in Pall Mall;—I had been told that it was the fashionable resort of every morning lounge, who wished either to see or to be seen in the busy rendezvous of notoriety. It was my morning task to watch at my window; my evening occupation was that of traversing the streets, with the hope of seeing Sir Sidney's carriage waiting to convey them to some place of public amusement. Three days passed, and I was still unsuccessful;—but the fourth!—Oh, Rosanna! how shall I transcribe the page of cureless misery, which time has engraved upon my heart in characters indelible? How shall I unfold the events of that fatal period, in which I abjured every hope of happiness; every gleam of future consolation?

A second masquerade was announced at the Opera-house. The recollection that I had seen Isabella at Mrs. Heartwell's made me determine on going, in hopes that I should again meet the woman who was now almost an object of abhorrence, and more than ever the source of an hopeless attachment. Again a disguise was provided, and again I flew to the scene of folly and intrigue, armed with resentment, and impatient for an opportunity to vent the indignation

of

of my full heart. There again I found the same phalanx of restless spirits that never cease to wander in the haunts of dissipation. Every one seemed dying with *ennui*, and no one either tried to amuse, or wished to be amused : languor, universal languor, pervaded the scene, excepting only here and there a busy couple arranging plans for future disgrace, and uttering ill-natured truths, under the specious disguise of wit or admonition. Many a fair sylph, who had recently been initiated in the mystic rites of the higher regions, here made her *debut* in the mazes of deception, or the flowery paths of modern gallantry, till the festoons of coloured lamps glimmered their last rays, and the morning came, to discover the weary group half asleep, half dressed, half dirty, and more than half dissatisfied with their night's entertainment.

On entering the crowd, I fancied that I saw and heard, at least, a dozen Isabellas. Every pretty figure, every soft voice, seemed to mark the object of my search. At length a female passed me, and with more than ordinary attention darted the lustre of her blue piercing eyes through the black screen which concealed every other feature. I stopped short ; she turned round, and courteously kissed her hand. A female friend accompanied her ; I followed them ; attempted to enter into conversation ; but the beautiful *incognita* was dumb ;—not a word would she utter ; and I began at last to grow impatient.

She seated herself at the supper table ; whispered and laughed with her companion ; offered me a glass of iced fruit, and again whispered. I now observed a man who seated himself by her side, and by his address knew him to be Doctor Pimpernel. “ Divine creature ! ” said he, “ how celestially you look ! I have been searching after you this half hour. My noble friend Lord Kewcastle wants to present a young stranger to you ; a fellow that is dying by G—d : he

has watched you all the night, and wants to know who the mask was that persecuted you before supper?" The lady whispered. The doctor instantly fixed his eyes on me with inquisitive rudeness. I sat perfectly still, gratifying his curiosity, and secretly cherishing a new source of indignation, when two black domines bowed to the fair unknown. The doctor rose, and with obsequious attention gave his place to one of them; while the other came round the table, and took his seat next to me.

He gazed at me with an earnest and unceasing inquietude; and by his evidently restless manner, I concluded that he wished to quarrel. This intercourse of menacing looks continued for some time, when the stranger, in a feigned voice, addressed me.

"Why," said he, "why do you follow that lady?"

"Because it amuses me," answered I.

"Is she your mistress?"

I made no reply.

"Is she the woman of your heart?" said the inquisitive mask.

"She was—once, I believe," answered I, with some hesitation.

"You believe!" repeated the inquirer; "are you not certain?"

"Not quite," said I; "but if you know the lady, you can place the surmise beyond a doubt."

"Ridiculous!" cried the mask. "What right have you to persecute a stranger, upon mere surmise?"

"The right which you assume when you ask the question," said I. "But as I am not more disposed to listen to impertinence, than you are to cease offending, I think the most decisive way of settling the business, is for both of us to unmask." At this instant I snatched the disguise from my face; the stranger was on the point of following my example, when

when he started back and sunk upon the bench behind him. Still he kept his mask on, and conjecture was more bewildered than ever; I knew that decorum would not admit of my touching it; and yet it was impossible for me to let the affair rest in doubt; or for the offender to escape with impunity, after his impertinent interference.

The lady who had excited my curiosity and the jealousy of my unknown inquisitor, now rose to mingle with the dancers. The black domino and Doctor Pimpernel accompanied her; I started from my seat, and followed them. The doctor would have hustled me, but I still persevered—Again my arm was checked, and a voice which seemed familiar to me exclaimed—"By Heavens, Walsingham! you shall not follow her."

I turned suddenly round, and the stranger unmasking, I discovered that it was my persecuting antagonist Sir Sidney Aubrey.

He stretched forth his hand with the most eager cordiality, accompanied by a smile, which seemed an additional insult.—My sensations were undescribable—Smarting with the keenest sense of injury, deceived, deserted, neglected, and robbed of every hope, I turned with disgust from a reconciliation which would have disgraced me, and left Sir Sidney the victorious husband of Isabella.—The idea was distracting—insupportable! I would have departed without making any answer to my cousin's strange injunction;—I wished not to seek a quarrel. I shuddered at the thought of shedding his blood, even though he had tortured my heart with the most inhuman persecutions. I paused—I struggled with the conflicts of my soul.

Sir Sidney's countenance was provokingly cheerful.—"I am glad that we meet once more," said he; "for I have an infinite page of time to unfold—full of events, and interesting to us both."

Impertinent

Impotent as I deemed his mirth, I still had sufficient command of myself to forbear offering him any insult. I was resolved not to sacrifice my life for an ungrateful woman—a deeper, sweeter vengeance occupied my mind;—vengeance, which I believed would render all the events of future days wholly indifferent. Had Sir Sidney annihilated me on the first hour that he entertained a passion for Isabella, there would have been a degree of mercy to grace his triumph: but he consigned my lacerated breast to months of lingering torture!—darkened my hopes of fame, my paths to fortune!—and, by his fatal machinations, undermined every affection of the heart, every source of peace and reputation!

I was again endeavouring to quit the theatre, when Sir Sidney caught my arm and exclaimed—“Gracious God! have you forgot me, Walsingham?”

“Would to heaven I had!” replied I, endeavouring to break from him.—“Let go my arm, Sir Sidney; do not propel my thoughts to mischief; there is danger in thus irritating an unquiet spirit; avoid it, if you value your existence.”

“How idly you talk, Walsingham,” cried Sir Sidney; “how little do you know my motives for that, which you deem persecution! You have sense, discernment, feeling!—you have faculties of mind that should place it above prejudice.”

I endeavoured to break from him: “By the immortal Powers, Sir Sidney!” exclaimed I, maddening with rage, “this insolence is not to be endured! This perpetual, this untiring tyranny will rouse me to resistance; and one of us will be the victim. Beware, I charge you to beware, how you provoke my vengeance! I have been long enough the slave of your determined cruelty;—the hour of retribution is at hand, and may the protection

tection of Heaven forsake me if I do not well employ it."

"Bravo!" cried Sir Sidney, giving me a smart tap upon the shoulder; "out with your rage!—let the storm have vent, and then we will talk reasonably."

I smothered my frenzy, for I was little less than frantic—We returned to a table which was entirely deserted. Sir Sidney called for a bottle of champagne; I had already drunk too much, my blood was fevered, my brain burning with agony, my heart throbbing with resentment.

"Why, what a silly, hot-headed fellow art thou, my good cousin!" cried Sir Sidney, filling my glass, and laughing with provoking jocularly. "Where have you been since I saw you last?—in what corner of this great chaos of folly and dissipation have you concealed yourself, to cherish resentment, and to overwhelm your reason?"

"Before you ask the question," said I, "tell me, Sir Sidney, why you have robbed me of repose?—why you seduced the affections of Isabella?—why you now set the world's opinion at defiance, and thus publicly expose the infamy of your triumph?"

"Because it pleases me," replied Sir Sidney, with cool and irritating indifference. "Isabella is a pleasant girl, who wishes to travel; I am a social being, and want a companion."

"And I a tame, disgraced, and abject fool!" said I, "to bear the insults that you every moment heap upon me!—Hear me, Sir Sidney.—You have from your earliest childhood been the bane of my repose; you have treated me unworthily, inhumanly! Every wish of my heart has been crossed and counteracted by your barbarous machinations. Born to supplant me, you have fully answered all the purposes of fate, and your rancour will never terminate till one of us shall fall. I speak not from the impulse of the moment:

ment: I have long ruminated, on the tenor of your conduct; and despised myself for the baseness of submission. Had you not been created, I had been happy. The hour which gave you birth sealed my destiny with sorrow. Can I esteem, can I love the author of my misery? Have I, through the long and tedious path of life, cherished one hope, attached myself to one dear object, of which you have not deprived me? Ask your heart, and tell me the result of its confession."

Sir Sidney seemed lost in thought.—I swallowed a large draught of intoxicating liquor—and waited with infinite self-constraint for my cousin's answer.—He was silent, and I again addressed him—

"You have not even the slightest plea for your duplicity. I read the tacit confession of your soul in your involuntary silence! Why then sting my breast with perpetual scorpions?—why hunt me like a weary panting victim, and enjoy the agonies with which you wring my bosom in proportion as they become insupportable? It is my misfortune, my curse, to love Isabella!—yes, to love her amidst all her indiscretions, to pity the weakness of her nature, and to lament the capricious conduct which any being less devoted than myself would execrate."

Sir Sidney's colour changed—he bit his lip—with a trembling hand raised the glass towards it, again placing it on the table—rested his head against a pillar near his seat, and seemed overpowered with agitation. He rose to leave me, but he had not strength to accomplish his purpose. The big drops started from his forehead—I fancied that his eyes were glazed with tears—he instantly concealed them. After an agonizing struggle, with quivering lips and a tone of inarticulate sorrow, he replied—

"Isabella is my friend—"

"Your mistress!" interrupted I.

"No! by the sacred powers of truth—by all that

is dear to honour ! she *is* not, she never *shall* be my mistress :—I love Isabella too well to see her degraded, even were it possible that she could consider me as a lover.”

“ You know, Sir Sidney, that your vanity has long since told you Isabella would be, nay is, vain of such a lover.”

“ How little do you know her !” cried Sir Sidney, with a forced and melancholy smile ; “ she loves me as a friend—no more. We are united by the sacred bonds of sympathy—no mortal interference ever shall divide us : my honour will still be her safeguard—she is as innocent as an angel.”

“ Then resign her to me,” said I—“ restore the peace of mind, of which you deprived me, when you robbed me of Isabella’s society. Be generous ; be the character you assume—trifle no longer with my happiness, my existence, but give me Isabella.”

“ Never !” replied Sir Sidney. “ I will willingly expire ! but never while you breathe, Walsingham, shall you be the husband of Miss Hanbury. She has sworn to me, she has engaged herself by every sacred solemn oath, never to become your wife.”

“ Barbarous, vindictive, vile, insulting coward !” said I.

Sir Sidney started from his seat. His face reddened to the deepest scarlet ; then as suddenly became pale and distorted. “ Walsingham,” said he, stifling his indignation, “ do not disgrace me—do not stamp my name with infamy, or urge me on to my own eternal ruin. I was not organized to bear with passive submission such repeated insults. A time will come when your rash heart will ache at the recollection of your folly—mine will then be tranquil !”

“ Let us decide the business quickly,” said I, following him from the table—“ You must relinquish Isabella, or meet me to settle the dispute to-morrow.”

“ Then I *will* meet you,” replied Sir Sidney ; “ for
I would

I would readily prefer death to the idea of beholding Miss Hanbury your wife. Rash and ungrateful Walsingham! you shall find me at the close of to-morrow evening near the river in Hyde-Park; from thence we can adjourn to some convenient spot, and end the contest finally: only remember that *my* resolution is already fixed—*my* fate determined. Your future days will be devoted to misery, repentance and despair!’

I smiled at the implied menace, and we instantly parted.

At this moment again a tall and beautiful figure, dressed in a black gauze robe spangled with silver, darted by me. I followed her.—I caught her hand—I pressed it—she did not reprove the daring experiment—I whispered, “Oh, Isabella! speak to me now, for to-morrow we shall part for ever!”

She shook her head and sighed. I held her hand—it trembled; she looked round, as if to join her company, and then entered the supper-room, which was empty. “Grant me yet a moment,” said I; “one little moment will not contaminate your love—my rival would not, at such a crisis, refuse so small a gleam of consolation.”

She seemed afflicted, but she remained masked, and silent. I pressed her hand to my parched lips; she gently tried to withdraw it, but it was a feeble effort; my tortured heart interpreted her want of power to sensibility,—dare I confess?—to something tenderer than pity! I was mad with transport. The sudden change from agony to joy possessed my faculties—“Blessed Isabella!” said I, “dearest and most adored of women! it is thy lost, distressed Walsingham that thanks thee even for this town of play! withdraw it not! Perhaps it is destined to grieve upon my grave!”

She shuddered; I continued—

“Do you love Sir Henry Aubrey? Tell me, Isabella,”

bella ; let me not expire in the dreadful uncertainty of that which bows me to destruction."

She again shook her head. I no longer recollected our situation—the world was indifferent to me ; I snatched her to my bosom—she threw me from her. I fell at her feet—"Forgive me, angel, Isabella ! I am not in my senses—I shall offend no more. Soon, very soon, this aching heart will be cold and senseless !"

She turned suddenly from me, and flew towards the saloon : I followed till she reached the portico. She seemed bewildered, as though she had lost her party ; a hackney coach at that moment drawing up, the door was opened, when, scarcely knowing what I did, I caught her in my arms, and, placing her by my side, ordered the coachman to drive on : he instantly obeyed. Overwhelmed with terror, and (forgive me, Rosanna, if I say) subdued by affection, she sunk upon my breast, and fainted.

My alarm was terrible : I concluded that, in the violence of my phrenzy, I had struck her head against the carriage. I stopped the coachman, and bid him hasten to my lodgings in Pall-Mall. The door was opened by my servant. I informed him that the lady had fainted coming out of the Opera-House ; he helped me to support her to the drawing-room, and, after bringing a glass of water, left us.

The inordinate quantity of wine which in my rage and vexation I had swallowed, soon took possession of my brain. I knew not where I was ; the image of Isabella still predominated, while indignation and ré-venge occupied the throne of reason ! I fetched the light which my servant had left upon the table to see whether her features began to reanimate : my limbs were unsteady—I reeled—the candlestick fell from my hand ; while the faintest dawn of day entered between the shutters. I fell at the feet of my beautiful *incognita*.—She wept, and sighed ; she hid her face upon
my

my shoulder. The time, the place, the potency of the fatal draughts which I had swallowed, conspired to madden me! all the claims of unprotected innocence, all the laws of honour were violated—and—I was a villain!

C H A P. III.

THE sun rose; the busy world began to recommence its varying scenes of labour, and I, no longer yielding every sense to the stupor of intoxication, awoke to reason, to reflection, to abhorrence of myself. But, oh Heavens! Resanna! what horrors undescribable seized on all my faculties! what misery, what despair presented themselves to my mind, when almost driven to frenzy, and bathed in floods of tears, I beheld—not Isabella—but the unfortunate Amelia!

My anguish was complete! The only plea to palliate my crime, was retaliation for the capricious Isabella's conduct, and Sir Sidney's barbarous exultations.—That shadow of extenuation was now vanished. I had been the dupe of my own impetuous passions; the destruction of a weak, credulous, fond girl, whom I did not, could not love, but to whom I owed inestimable obligations.—Thus, adding to the misery of dishonour, the stings of the most shameless ingratitude; at once a base and despicable fool, and a daring unprincipled libertine. I had been rash, imprudent, and unfortunate; but till this disastrous hour I had never been dishonourable. The tears, the complaints, the tender sorrows of my victim, only augmented my regret, without touching my sensibility. I was too wretched to know pity, too distracted to feel the throb of commiseration. All the sensations of my heart were absorbed in one vast and undescribable affliction; and the only idea that succeeded the first paroxysm of despair, was that of vengeance, decisive vengeance, on the arrogant Sir Sidney.

My

My situation was terrible ! I knew of no asylum where I could shelter Amelia from the ills that threatened her ; and to present her to the world as my avowed mistress would have been rashly, finally ruinous to her reputation. She avowed her determination never to return to that home which she had deserted ; though the recollection of what her mother's mind would suffer, while labouring under the conflicts of suspense and doubt, presented more dreadful tortures than even the consciousness of her own destruction. She had from that fatal hour to solicit protection among strangers, or to try the painful experiment of seeking the balm of consolation from a smiling herd of specious summer friends, who bask in the sunshine of adversity, and like the emigrating bird, fly at the approach of cold and cheerless sorrow. The task which I had to perform, the difficult task of preserving a name from contempt which was sullied by indiscretion, puzzled and perplexed me, even if I survived the rencontre with Sir Sidney ; and the idea of leaving her to the mercy of a sternly judging world, almost bewildered me to madness.

In the moment of calamity I had no alternative but that of placing Miss Woodford in a lodging near the metropolis ; we instantly set out, and hired apartments at Kensington: she took possession of them the same evening as my sister, with the assumed name of Montagu.

I returned to town to meet Sir Sidney—You will judge of my situation—quitting an amiable object, who was the victim of her own susceptibility, yet whom I could not love ; so lately subdued, and so soon deserted :—my conflicts were dreadful. I wished not to escape Sir Sidney's resentment ; I had no prospect so sweet, so soothing, as that of death. To what misery, what terrible extremes, will our ungovernable passions lead us !

I waited

I waited in Hyde Park more than an hour : twilight closed, and I saw nothing of Sir Sidney. At a loss to comprehend the meaning of his absence, for I did not consider cowardice as one of his imperfections, I continued to stroll up and down the footpath till night came on, when a little boy passed and repassed me with looks of doubt and curiosity. I inquired of him whether he had any message for me : he presented a letter, which he said a lady had given him near the Park gate in Piccadilly. I rewarded him for his trouble, and hastened to the turnpike, where I stopped to examine it. It contained the following words :

“ Rash and unthinking Walsingham !—You know
 “ not what you meditate ; Sir Sidney *shall not*
 “ meet you ; a life so *precious* must not be sacrificed
 “ to a mad and persevering revenge, founded on
 “ mistaken principles of honour. Wait, I conjure
 “ you, wait with patience ; and time will unravel
 “ the spell that now retards your prospects.

“ ISABELLA.”

I read the letter several times before I could believe my senses. I knew it to be the writing of Miss Hanbury, and I construed its contents a thousand different ways. —I hastened to Kensington. Amelia was in tears when I entered the apartment : I knew not what to say ; hating myself for the thought of dissembling, and regarding her repose too tenderly to hazard a disclosure of my real situation. I remained with her till near midnight, tortured by compunction, and yet not daring to mortify her pride, by pleading intoxication as the cause of her dishonour ; for to know that she was mistaken for another—that my frantic imagination presented the idea of Isabella at a time when reason was subservient to the frenzy of the moment—left her no hope of honourable retri-
 bution

bation, no prospect of attachment, no ray of consolation.

I found upon inquiry, that Miss Woodford's visit to Mrs. O'Liffy, on the morning after the first masquerade, was prompted by curiosity to inquire the dress which was worn by the female who accompanied the Welsh baronet. Propelled by that undefinable impulse which some call fate, she resolved on assuming a similar disguise; in order to watch my actions, and if possible, under the outward form of Isabella, to obtain a full confession of my most secret wishes. Fatal was the result of her curiosity!—not only the ruin of her own reputation, but the eternal misery of a being fondly attached to her, and, by the most inestimable qualities of mind, deserving of a prouder destiny.

Miss Woodford scarcely spoke to me during the evening; the stupor of grief almost deprived her of the power of utterance. She frequently murmured her mother's name, and never without a torrent of tears, which at length softened my heart to sympathy and compunction; for I reflected, that the amiable object before me, in a few days, would have been the partner of an honourable union—the pride and ornament of domestic tranquillity.

The mistress of the house promised to shew Miss Woodford every attention. I presented her as an invalid; her pale countenance, her languid eyes, and her dejected looks, fully authorised the description. Every gentle reproof, every timid, yet mournful word she uttered, pierced my heart with self-reproach: yet even the disgrace, which her childish curiosity had brought upon her, did not so keenly agonise my breast, as the dreadful, the fatal necessity for that dissimulation which could alone preserve her from frenzy. For though I had destroyed the lustre of her days, I had no right to shorten them; though

though my passions had mastered my reason, they were not to subdue the claims of humanity.

Returned to London, after promising Amelia that she should see me early the following day, I hastened to my friend Optic, and without disguise unfolded the horrors of my situation. He shuddered:—the nice, the genuine sensibility of his mind, anticipated the vast variety of ills that would inevitably accrue from my frantic precipitation. “You must marry Amelia,” said he; “you must restore her to society, and thereby make her an honourable recompence for the present moment of despair.”

“Impossible!” said I.

“Seal not her destiny by any rash determination,” cried Mr. Optic. “Only I conjure you to reflect, that, in a few hours, the tongue of calumny may blast a name which you are bound to defend. The fondness and maternal ambition of Mrs. Woodford, the respectability of her connections, Amelia’s blameless manners, and the censure of every honourable mind, will rise up in arms against you; and you will find no generous, manly heart, that will not condemn your conduct. For my own part,” continued he, with a severity of tone unlike any thing that I had heard in our former conversations, “I must, as the friend of Amelia Woodford, decidedly reprobate that levity, which, while it gratifies the passion of a libertine, destroys the repose of unprotected innocence. I am no cynic; but the plan which you have adopted sets all toleration at defiance.”

With this stern reproof he left me, more wretched and more at a loss how to act than I was even before I had requested his counsel on the subject.

Mr. Optic had scarcely quitted the room three minutes, when Doctor Pimpnel entered. He seemed disconcerted at seeing me, and I was no less confused at meeting the person from whose power I had so recently

recently rescued the very woman whom I had since robbed of peace and reputation. The doctor soon released me from my embarrassment by vociferating —“ My noble fellow ! what induced you to write me such an absurd letter ?—The poor little hussy was in better hands than she probably now is : for I suppose you have heard that she eloped last night from the Opera-house with nobody knows whom !—All the world talks of it, and the old woman is little less than mad ; —mad by the immortal gods ! as mad as —But no matter ; the whole human race is more or less insane, and one old woman, in the great scale of events, is of little importance.”

“ I am heartily sorry to hear that the world is so busily employed in propagating scandal,” said I ; “ but I am still more sincerely grieved, that there is occasion for their industry in the present instance.”

My voice faltered, and my mind was agonised to a degree that was scarcely supportable.

“ She was a fool to elope,” continued the doctor. “ A few days would have given her full liberty to indulge her propensities, without the peril of public disgrace ; for, if I am rightly informed, the little blockhead was to have been married. The old duke, and half a dozen more on the list of her inamoratos, waited impatiently for the event.—Well.”

“ Do you suppose that an intrigue would have followed an honourable union with such rapidity ?” said I.

“ Unquestionably,” replied the doctor. “ Amelia was too highly bred not to assert her claim to a diploma in the temple of gallantry. She was killed long enough ; it is time that she should begin to cure. *À propos*—I have been calling on half the divine creatures at the west end of the town ; nothing talked of but the elopement. I looked in upon the Duchess of Riversford ;—she, knowing the

the case to be natural, was not at all surpris'd at it. Lady Ethiop wondered how a man could be such a fool as to elope with such a young hoyden; Mrs. Winkwell stared more than usual; Lady Fubfy blush'd deep purple at the profligacy of the rising generation; Miss Casino giggled; and Lady Amaranth was the only woman in the circle who did not change countenance."

Poor Amelia! thought I, these were thy friends, thy associates. Where shall I hide thee from their barbarous triumphs?—My mind was wrapt in thought, when the doctor continued:—"I must go and tell the old duke; his joy will be excessive. The faucy baggage has long resist'd his sollicitations; even a *carte blanche*, and the villa at Hampton, could not tempt her; but the frozen heart once thaw'd, the broad sun of reason will soon expand its philanthropy. Well—I must make a memorandum to call on Doleful—got him a subscriber—but he must immortalize my name for it; or the slave shall be blotted from the list of Heaven's own nobility. Poor Dole! he is but a blockhead after all;—he too is going to do a foolish thing, and to marry, because a little jade has fallen in love with him. Never, my noble Montagu! never, while you live, think of that enemy to universal liberty—that d—d despot Hymen! He has shackled more fools than all the tyrants in Christendom. But universal freedom is dawning on the sphere of human understanding, and man will fly, even to the very stars. Were you at the masquerade last night?"

"I was," answered I.

"What an assemblage of beauty!" exclaimed the doctor. "I thought that I was in Mahomet's paradise!—Went home and supped with the pretty jade Amoret, and her comical friend Mrs. O'Liffy. Both confoundedly ancient! Well—no matter—drank to-day and clear'd out of the first cellar in town!—delicious—

cious—sublime—fit for the gods!—Where were you? I wanted to introduce you to little Amoret.”

“ Was it Miss Amoret to whom you were talking at the supper-table ?” said I.

The doctor rubbed his forehead. “ O no, no,” answered he, after a moment’s recollection, “ that was Mrs. Winkwell : she hopped off with my noble friend Kencarth ;—presented him to her for the first time—like each other wonderfully—“ live and love” —so says the old song. The fine *animals* were invented to smoothe the rugged paths of fate. What say you, my Hercules ?”

“ They were created to be our first and best consolation,” said I ; “ but we are fools, and know not how to value them.”

“ Send the whole race to me,” cried the doctor, “ and I’ll tell you what they are worth; from fourteen to five-and-thirty :—all beyond that age should die. But man ! the grand creature man ! should live for ever !—A man at the age of sixty is in the glowing zenith of mental and corporeal beauty !”

I smiled.

“ You are sceptical,” cried the doctor.

“ I cannot hesitate to credit an opinion which is founded on experience,” said I ; though Heaven knows, I shall never live to corroborate the assertion.”

The doctor started.

“ Live !” vociferated he. “ Now I think of it, I left an old woman dying !—must take another peep at her ;—devilish rich. Well—Wish I knew where to find Amelia—arrogant little jade !—Want to give her some good advice ;—find her out, my noble fellow ! How goes your fever ?—Brain cool—pulse low head quiet. Well.”

The doctor now bustled off, and I set out to visit my disconsolate victim.

C H A P. IV.

I FOUND Miss Woodford in the deepest affliction : the sacrifice she had made, and the consciousness of what her parent would suffer, preyed upon her sensible mind, and almost reduced it to insanity. She conjured me to reflect on the misery to which I had exposed her ; and to decide quickly on the plan of my future intentions. I knew not how to meliorate her fate : I ought to have married her ; but there was mercy in refusing ; for while she had a claim upon my gratitude, while her sorrows awakened the tenderness of pity, she was sure of my attentions ; but had I once made her an honourable recompence, our mutual misery would have been the inevitable consequence ; with all the hideous train of reproach, indifference, repentance, and disgust.

The agonising regret I experienced, when memory presented that fatal moment which gave Amelia to my ungovernable revenge, rendered every other species of calamity trifling ; and there was no pang, which fortune could inflict, that I could not have borne with patience, to have restored that purity of reputation which her folly and my inebriety conspired to tarnish. She was, in fact, the victim of her own fatal curiosity ; on the eve of a marriage which her heart abhorred, and too tenderly prejudiced in favour of one who was unworthy of her affection, she became almost a voluntary sacrifice. I do not hope to extenuate my conduct ; I do not seek to stigmatise Amelia ;—yet reflection sometimes soothes me with the conviction that we were equally culpable.

I continued to visit Miss Woodford as my sister ; to console her affliction by the most unremitting attentions ; and to provide every worldly comfort, as far as my slender fortune afforded the means ; but no art, no persuasion could soften the acute sufferings of
 mental

mental torture ; no outward shew of pleasure compensate for the agony of self-reproof ; no kind or soothing solicitude restore that jewel reputation, which I had robbed her of ; and which was doubly valuable where fortune dealt her favours with a sparing hand.

We had passed four days in our retreat, when calling at the Mount coffee-house, to know if there were any letters for me, I found a note from Colonel Aubrey, informing me that he was in town for a few hours only : that he was to sail for Gibraltar in two days, Lord Linbourne's death rendering his departure absolutely necessary. I hastened to his lodgings. I found him strangely altered ; his countenance was sorrowful, his cheek pale, his form wasted, and his manner dejected. He embraced me with the affection of a father : I shrunk upon a chair before him.

" Lord Linbourne has at length paid the forfeit of his indiscretion," said Colonel Aubrey, " and my hand is stained with the life-blood of a fellow-creature ! The reflection is terrible ! " He shuddered, and walked hastily about the room. I had not power to address him. The recollection that he had been guilty of tolerated murder, in my defence, wrung my heart with the keenest reproaches. After a short pause, he resumed the conversation he had begun :

" Walsingham," said he, " I know the sensibility of your mind ; and I requested this interview to assure you, that I do not condemn any part of your conduct respecting Lord Linbourne. I was, indeed, to blame, for introducing an inexperienced boy into the society of such infernal harpies ! My friendship for you is therefore undiminished."

I thanked Colonel Aubrey for his unbounded generosity ; yet, conscious that I had been the cause of a rencontre which had terminated so fatally, I felt the keenest anguish mingled with the most lively gratitude. He was visibly concerned to observe my depression of spirits, and with the most affecting kind-

ness entreated me to think no more of the adventure: "Lord Linbourne," said he, "was an unworthy wretch, and little deserves the pity of a moment. Indeed, terrible as his death appears, it was scarcely to be accounted painful, when compared with the pangs which I have since suffered. But time is precious at this moment. I have business of importance to transact with my agent, and if you will dine with me at five o'clock, we will arrange every thing for our last separation, or our immediate departure."

I took my leave, and hastened back to Amelia. The few hours between my interview with Colonel Aubrey and the time appointed for dinner, I resolved to pass in breaking my wish to her, and in sounding her mind respecting my voyage to Gibraltar. She met me with smiles of complacency, which rendered the task I had to perform doubly painful; for the pleasure which I felt in seeing her a degree less melancholy, made me unwilling to snatch the faint gleam of peace from her bosom, and again to overwhelm her with a new torrent of affliction.

After various subjects of conversation, I ventured to mention the propensity which I had ever felt for a military life: I told her that it had been my earliest wish, and my long cherished hope, that I should either end my days, or attain some share of distinction, on the field of warfare. She sighed, and remained silent; but her features, by their instantaneous change, gave proof of her bosom's apprehension. Still—I continued:

"Neither the favourite of fame nor of fortune; alas! Amelia, what can I bring you but a frail and sorrowing heart? How can I recompense you for all the anguish you now suffer, situated as I am, poor, abandoned by my relations, in hourly dread of a dreary captivity, and with affections irrevocably—"

"Devoted to another," interrupted Miss Woodord, bursting into tears.

"Even

" Even so ! " said I. " To dissemble now, would be more than blameable ; it would be inhuman. You have my esteem,—my friendship,—my gratitude. The dreadful moment of intoxication which overturned my reason, did not render you less amiable, less virtuous ! The culpability was mine :—yours, Amelia, the too credulous, too partial weakness of a misplaced attachment. Consider me henceforth as a dear brother. Return to your afflicted parent, and endeavour to forget that hour, the remembrance of which will scatter eternal poisons on your pillow."

" Must I forget you, Walsingham ? " said Amelia, with a look that penetrated my heart : " Must I abjure every cherished prospect of happiness, and return to my melancholy home, like a wretched penitent ? Suffer me to be the partner of your enterprise :—I can bear the fatigues of a soldier's wandering life : I can even disguise my sex, to be the partaker of your peril. The heart which can really love, is superior to apprehension. Try my courage ;—prove my affection !—you cannot—you will not refuse me the gratification of being your companion."

The softness of her voice,—the contrasting energy of her expressions,—the consciousness of my own unworthy conduct,—conspired to check my tongue, and I continued strolling about the room like one that was bewildered. Amelia's tears roused me from the deep and mournful reverie, " You cannot," said I, " generous Amelia, indeed you cannot be the partner of my voyage. I shall have to cross the wide and fickle ocean,—to dare the perils of that boisterous element, whose storms would terrify, and perhaps destroy you. Besides, my gentle friend," continued I, taking her trembling hand, " the accommodations of a fortress will but ill suit your tender nature. My duty, as a young soldier, would consign you to almost a perpetual solitude. You would look back with re-

gret to the gay and splendid world ; you would sigh, in vain, for the paths you had deserted."

Heavens ! how little do you know the female heart !" exclaimed Miss Woodford : " How falsely, how injuriously do you pass sentence on the purest and most unconquerable attachment. Ungenerous Walsingham ! I will not sue for consolation : I will endeavour to exert my fortitude ; to relinquish every weak and fondly treasured hope ; to resent your injustice, and to banish you from my rejected heart for ever. You shall behold how strongly reason can fortify the soul, when love no longer undermines its faculties. You shall hourly witness my returning peace of mind, my tranquil scenes of pure domestic happiness ; and tremble, ungrateful Walsingham ! while I demand, instead of childish empty adoration, respect, esteem, and gratitude, as the wife of Colonel Aubrey !"

I reeled, and fell.

" Yes, Walsingham," cried Amelia : " Colonel Aubrey was that lover, that generous, brave, neglected lover, to whom my hand was promised. I will instantly seek him : I will throw myself at his feet ; confess my weakness, and your ungenerous triumph ! If he will pardon an offending suppliant, my whole life shall be devoted to the promotion of his happiness ;—days, months, and years of duty and esteem ; of faithful friendship—undivided attention, and domestic virtue ;—all, all shall be Colonel Aubrey's. We will cross that perilous ocean ; we will brave the hardships of a sea-encircled fortress ; we will mock the storms of fate, and quit the busy splendid scenes of life, for ever."

With difficulty I raised myself from the ground, and darted towards the door. Amelia would have held me ;—my features were wild and terrible ;—she shrieked ;—she clasped me in her trembling arms :—I tore myself from her ;—and, like a bewildered maniac,

niac, flew towards London, in search of Colonel Aubrey.

CHAP. V.

I PURSUED my course, talking to myself incoherently, looking like one distracted, and totally disregarding the foot passengers, who made way for me with pity and astonishment. Entering Hyde-park corner, I met Mrs. Woodford. I shrunk almost to the earth, and passed her unobserved:—she was in Mrs. O'Liffy's carriage, and they were driving furiously towards Knightbridge. I had not proceeded fifty yards, when two men, directed by the Duke of Heartwing's insolent servant, seized me; a crowd assembled; the circumstance of my having been advertised, with so large a reward for apprehending me, convinced the inquisitive spectators (for an English populace is easily taught to believe any thing) that I was a notorious offender. The state of my mind precluding the possibility of making any rational defence, I was hustled into an hackney coach; and, followed by a long train of the idle and the curious, conveyed to a justice of the peace for further examination.

The justice not knowing how to proceed on so singular a case, and being newly invested with the dignities of his office, ordered me to be placed in safe custody, at the house of a sheriff's officer. The idea of confinement at so critical a moment, when Amelia was left wholly unprotected, and Colonel Aubrey on the eve of departure, added to the anticipated horrors of a long captivity, and the loss of the opportunity which presented itself, of quitting England for ever, overwhelmed me with affliction.

Arrived in Carey-street, and once more a prisoner, I began to summon my recollection, and to devise the most probable means for my speedy emancipation, when the master of the house paid me a visit. The

melancholy prospects which imagination had conjured up, seemed to assume a new and softer colour on the appearance of Mr. Rightly. His liberal mind and suavity of manners would have poured consolation on my sorrows, had they been of less magnitude in mental pangs, as well as the severities of fortune. He however entreated me to consider my temporary confinement as a mere form of law, which should under his roof bring with it neither terror nor extortion. The benevolence and liberality which distinguished his character from the herd of barbarians, who undertook the office of tormenting their fellow-creatures, made me lament that he was not placed in that sphere, which his merit would have honoured; at the same time, I considered it as a great benefit to the world in general, that there existed one man who could execute the rigours of the law, with that mildness and humanity which divested them of more than half their severity.

The attorney who had issued the writ against Mr. Randolph, was gone to his villa, at some distance from the metropolis. His clerks could not give any satisfactory information, and I was obliged to remain that night at Mr. Rightly's. My anxiety was scarcely supportable. As time moved tardily, the fever of my mind increased. It was in vain that I listened to the voice of consolation; no power of pity could draw my attention from the sombre phantoms that encompassed me on all sides. All Mr. Rightly's humanity, all his disinterested civilities, could not extract the thorn of self-reproach which sunk deeply in my heart. As the hours advanced, my agony increased, till the anguish of my mind burst forth in all the wildness of despair; and before midnight I was perfectly frantic.

I dispatched a messenger for my philanthropic friend Mr. Optic. He quitted his bed to obey the summons of distress, and in less than an hour I was in some degree

gree consoled by his appearance. I unfolded all the secrets of my heart. I knew, that in the bosom of honour and sensibility, I might deposit them with safety. Again Mr. Optic strongly urged the propriety of my marrying Miss Woodford:—he represented the miseries which were likely to assail her, unless I could make up my mind to the only compensation which remained for me to offer. I shuddered at the idea. The frailty which had rendered her my victim, made me suspect that she would scarcely fulfil, with honour, the duties of a wife. She had sacrificed a man who was her betrothed husband; and I had not the vanity to suppose, that she would respect that name, merely because it was sanctioned by the ceremonies of a priest. This may not be the doctrine of morality, but it is the reasoning of nature.

We sat the whole night, talking on the subject; and soon after day-break Mr. Optic, by his own request, set out for Kensington, to assure Amelia of my safety, and to tranquillize her mind with the consolations of friendship. I also wrote a few lines, earnestly conjuring her not to see Colonel Aubrey till my emancipation. My sorrows now became so complicated, that I scarcely knew which event formed the main spring of action on my senses. Pity, compunction, resentment, pride, and—affection, combined to torture me; each for a time predominating, and again in its turn yielding to the encroachment of a new torment.

Before noon Mr. Optic returned. On his entering the room, I read in his countenance the sensations of his mind. He threw himself into a chair, and without uttering a syllable, opened, by his looks, a volume of despair. Every artery in my feverish frame was convulsed with anticipated horrors. After a violent struggle between impatience and apprehension, I had just resolution to articulate, “I trust she yet lives?”

Mr. Optic replied, " She lives ; but in so pitiable a state, that it would be happiness to die ! Her agony of mind has nearly deprived her of reason, and she was, just before my arrival at her lodgings, conveyed to her mother's house completely wretched. I had not courage to behold her in such a state of ruin. I have too often admired her, in the lustre of her beauty, when health and innocence diffused a smile over her features, to contemplate the desolation of both, and still profess myself the friend of Mr. Ainsforth."

I shrunk almost to the ground. " Almighty God !" exclaimed I, " where will my sorrows end ? Oh, my friend !" continued I, addressing Mr. Optic, " for I will not suffer you to relinquish that title ; advise me, tell me how I ought to act ; devise some means to rescue this unhappy girl from the anguish of despair."

" I have already pointed out the only step you ought to take," replied Mr. Optic with a serious and impressive tone that penetrated my heart : " there is yet time to render justice ; and, whatever enlightened philosophy may inculcate, as long as the forms of moral virtue retain the power of supporting the decencies of life, it is our duty to adopt them."

" I cannot love Amelia ; I can esteem, admire, and respect her mental virtues," said I.

" By making her your wife, you will not diminish their claims to admiration, and you will procure for her that protection from the world, which will in some measure compensate for the loss of your affection," replied Mr. Optic : " she will then enjoy some small portion of repose. As your mistress,—neither valued by society nor beloved by you,—existence will be insupportable."

" I will endeavour to adopt your opinions," said I ; " feeling their propriety,—I will—if possible—become
a convert

a convert to the cause of honour,—though at the expence of all my hopes and all my affections.”

I had scarcely uttered these words, when Colonel Aubrey's name was announced. Mr. Optic took his leave, and I endeavoured to summon all my fortitude for the agonizing interview.

C H A P. VI.

COLONEL Aubrey's sorrow at beholding me in captivity for some moments prevented his speaking. I too was silent, but from another cause;—destined to meet the man whose hands I had stained with blood; whose friendship I had so little merited; whose peace of mind I had destroyed for ever; my torture was infinite! I dreaded to expose Amelia's name to the prying eye of censure; and yet I knew not how to preserve her reputation, without the most infamous hypocrisy towards my patron, my friend! that generous, brave, and liberal friend, who, when the world forsook, adopted me! who espoused my cause at the peril of his life; and voluntarily offered me the means of future happiness, when despair had threatened to be my only companion!

No culprit at the bar of condemnation ever looked more wretchedly self-convicted than I did, at the moment of Colonel Aubrey's entering the apartment. My blood seemed to rush through every vein with more than ordinary circulation; my heart throbbed with a sensation of cowardice, which till that moment it had never experienced; my eyes were bent upon the ground; my limbs scarcely able to sustain me. The only wish of my agitated soul, was that of instant annihilation. Colonel Aubrey grasped my hand, as he took it with the most hearty affection. I could not return the friendly pressure;—the remembrance of my unworthiness benumbed every fibre in my exhausted

hausted frame, till I fell on his shoulder, and groaned with agonizing conflicts.

"What possesses thee, boy?" cried Colonel Aubrey, shaking my arm, as if to rouse my recollection. "Art thou frantic? Though I lament Lord Linbourne's fate, I must not forget that I am a man. This inordinate grief is childish: a soldier's bosom should be steel'd against the tenderness of pity. Your intercourse with the refined part of society has enervated your mind;—resist—resist, or you will not do honour to the profession which, I trust, you mean to adopt in future."

"I was not created to resist," answered I, sternly desperate: "had the power of self-denial been given me; had not my mind been contaminated by early prejudices, arising from disappointed hopes, perhaps I had been worthy of your friendship: as it is, we must separate finally. I deserve nothing from your nice sense of honour—but vengeance or contempt. Take, I conjure you, take the former; and rid me of a being, that is now insupportable."

Colonel Aubrey smiled.—"I would not hurt thee, boy," said he; "I would not inflict a pang on thy heart, to be master of the universe. But I am a veteran in the service of love, as well as war; I can guess the cause of this strange repugnance: you wish to evade a promise which was a mere subterfuge from greater evils. You now look forward to brighter prospects:—some darling object occasions your apostacy, and you are too warm an idolater to prefer the turmoil of the camp, to the enchantments of beauty."

"You know not what I feel," said I, pacing hastily to and fro along the apartment.

"There you are deceived," replied Colonel Aubrey. "At the moment that I offer counsel, I am myself in want of consolation. Alas! Walsingham, the sternest outside may conceal the tenderest heart.

Sensibility

Sensibility depends not on the pursuits of life : many a rough and bleeding soldier, when the din of battle ceases, sighs for a beloved object, and, for her sake, feels a pang which his wounds would not have inflicted. God knows," continued he, shuddering, " I would rather have faced a cannon-ball than have met the misery which I now experience."

As he spoke, for the first time in my life, I observed a tear rolling heavily down his manly cheek, while his folded arms, and drooping head, seemed the emblems of unconquerable sorrow. After a silence of some minutes, with a deep sigh, he resumed the conversation.

" Walsingham," said he, with painful hesitation, " you remember my journey to Glenowen?"

I bowed assent, for I had not power to speak.

" You must also recollect the circumstance of my borrowing money from Lady Aubrey?—It was my intention to have bestowed that small sum as a marriage settlement upon a young person whom it has been, for a considerable time, my misfortune to idolize."—His voice faltered.—" Fie on this unmanly sensibility !" cried he. " I am ashamed—I am, indeed, ashamed of my weakness!—But this is no time for trifling ; I will therefore be explicit. The pleasing chimeras of fancy are for ever vanished ; the hopes, which the virtues of one, whom I thought perfect, first taught me to cherish, are now eternally destroyed. Oh ! Walsingham, had you known the angel I adored, you would not have wondered at my fondness. Yet, what had I to hope?—the inequality of our years was alone sufficient to convince me of my error. The money which I borrowed of Lady Aubrey will now be useless : I have no debts, but such as I can easily discharge ; no expences, but those which a soldier's pay will more than provide for. Accept then, my worthy, but ill-treated friend—accept the paltry sum, and marry Isabella."

" Isabella !

"Isabella!—'s not Isabella the destined wife of Sir Sidney Aubrey?" said I, starting, and ready to sink on the ground before him.

"Sir Sidney is not the destined husband of Miss Hanbury, believe me," replied Colonel Aubrey; "nay more, he never means to bear that title. Not three hours ago he assured me, upon his most sacred word of honour, that he entertained no thoughts of making her his wife; that though, for private reasons, he passed for such, she was innocent of the smallest indiscretion, and that his mind and soul were strongly, irrevocably, devoted to an object, far, very far different from Isabella."

"Would to Heaven I had known this but ten days sooner!" said I; "the intelligence comes too late to snatch me from despair. That evil power which has prevailed over every hope of happiness since my weary eyes first saw the light—that infernal demon, whose machinations taught me to hate Sir Sidney—who drove me from my native home—estranged me from the solitudes of peace—and now taunts me with a retrospect of bliss which can no more return—will never quit his victim, till frenzy, or the grave, shall close the scene of persecution."

"Yet have a little patience," cried Colonel Aubrey. "I will bear your wishes to Isabella; I will be your advocate: all that has passed shall be forgotten; and if I see you and the object of your choice happily united, I shall return to Gibraltar one degree less sad than I should be if I left you wretched; for my own repose is vanished, my treasured store of hopes wrested from me by a base and dastardly destroyer, who envied my few remaining days of joy, and robbed me, treacherously robbed me, of the woman I adored."

rose, and was hastening towards the door. My thoughts were wild—my determinations desperate!—Colonel Aubrey caught hold of my arm, and detained me.

me. "Yet one word more," said he, "and I have done. I also beg that you will accept a commission in my regiment, with leave to join us in six or twelve months, whichever shall be most agreeable to yourself and Isabella."

"Have a care!" said I wildly. "You know not what you say!—on whom you heap such agonizing kindness!—you are not sensible that I am——"

"What?" cried Colonel Aubrey, changing colour, and alarmed by my frenzied manner.

"The ruin of your peace!—the infernal fiend, whom hell has chosen for your evil genius!—the mad, impetuous fool who urged your hand to shed the blood of Lord Linbourne!—and, to fill up the horrible account of crimes, the destroyer of Amelia!"

Colonel Aubrey reeled back a few paces, and fell. I snatched up his sword, which he had laid on the table, and, darting out of the room, flew towards my chamber.

C H A P. VII.

I WAS hastening towards the apartment where I slept, and uttering a variety of frantic ejaculations, when I met Mr. Rightly, who, judging by my looks that I meditated mischief, stopped, and disarmed me. The task was not difficult; for sorrow, blended with compunction, so completely enervated my whole frame, that an infant might have overpowered me. I knew not what to do:—the distress which Colonel Aubrey evidently laboured under, and of which my precipitate conduct had been the original cause, was, with all its poignancy, trifling in comparison with what I at that moment suffered. Not only the miseries of my best and most generous friend, but the destruction of an innocent and amiable girl, pressed heavily on my conscience. What

was

was to be done under this accumulation of distress?— I had no remedy but in an act of desperation, no hope of tranquillity but in the grave.

Colonel Aubrey, after a short struggle between resentment and pity, quitted the house. I now had leisure and solitude to indulge my mournful ruminations, and the retrospect which they presented was terrible in the extreme. The friend on whose liberal mind I could have relied for the consolations of reason, was, by my rash actions, and no less imprudent avowal of them, estranged from me for ever. I had, after all the kindness which he had shewn me, after the voluntary protection and regard which his liberal heart had bestowed, not only embroiled his hands in blood, but wrung his bosom with the most undescrivable tortures. I had, towards Mrs. Woodford, acted no less unworthily: she, whose house had been my sanctuary, my safe and honourable asylum, when I was charged with crimes, branded with infamy—even she had not escaped the anguish of repentance, for having fostered in the bosom of friendship that being who was destined to rob her only child of honour and repose. Poor Amelia! thy sensibility, thy disinterested affection, were the bane of all that is dear to reputation, or sacred to hospitality!—Had I never been received as the inmate of thy abode, thou hadst yet been pure and happy. Thy virtues were thy destroyers; for the strong resemblance which they bore to those which once embellished the mind of Isabella, not only bewildered my senses, but laid the foundation for every future sorrow.

As soon as Colonel Aubrey was gone, I wrote a letter to Mrs. Woodford, proposing to make Amelia every honourable recompence in my power, and conjuring her to allow me an interview, in order that we might settle preliminaries for that purpose. I had sealed the proposal, and was directing it, when the

the following laconic note arrived from Colonel Aubrey :

“ If the object of my affection has been basely seduced, if her honour has been sacrificed to your artifice, I can yet pardon her deviation from chastity ; I can yet receive the deluded girl to my fond, foolish heart. But if on the contrary, you are the object of her choice—I expect that you rescue her from infamy, and bestow on her that title to which she has a claim by all the laws of rectitude and humanity. Send me a brief and candid answer ; for there is no time to trifle, where a woman’s reputation and happiness are in imminent danger. The world may condemn me ; but I shall feel a more delightful gratification in snatching an amiable object from the insults of the world, than ever the libertine experienced in seducing innocence from the paths of virtue.”

I read the letter over and over, and every time with augmented veneration for the character of that man, whose affection set the voice of calumny at defiance, and whose sensibility could pity the frailty of a beloved object, at the same moment that his humanity rescued her from despair. After a variety of reflections—an infinity of pain,—I snatched up my pen, and, with a trembling hand, hastily wrote this answer :

“ Amelia is the most amiable of women !—her virtues cannot be tarnished by her deviation from chastity. She was the victim of an innocent deception—I, an involuntary seducer. If you can summon resolution to brave the malice of the world, you will find every pure and transcendent qualification still embellishing the gentle, the unfortunate object of your generous attachment. As past events preclude the

the possibility of our ever meeting in future, accept my most grateful acknowledgments for friendship that has been unbounded, and endeavour to forget that a being exists, whose perverse fortune has rendered you so vile a recompence."

The letter being dispatched, I again indulged the ruminations of despair. The idea of self-destruction, which had frequently predominated in my mind in moments of calamity, now seemed to acquire a decisive victory over all the suggestions of fortitude and reason. I ventured to doubt the criminality of the deed, and the being, who in matters of moral tendency can once become a sceptic, will not hesitate in time to avow himself a decided apostate. The world had no prospect of happiness for me; Fortune frowned upon my hopes, and Nature shuddered while reflection pointed out the temptations with which the proud, yet feeling heart, is environed in the dreary paths of adversity. Born to destroy the peace of every being whose affection fostered me, I had only one step to take, if I continued to exist, which was to fly from society, and to become a voluntary recluse, a solitary misanthropist.

Mr. Rightly endeavoured to sooth my mind by promises of every service that his power could render me. The lawyer, whom Mr. Randolph's creditor had employed, was still engaged with a party on a pleasurable excursion; and, till his return to the paths of professional duty, I was under the necessity of remaining a prisoner. Mrs. Rightly was a polite and amiable woman: I was indulged with an apartment at their private house, and, on my *parole d'honneur*, became one of the family. My chagrin, notwithstanding all this marked indulgence, was not to be overcome. I gave way to the most incessant and mournful meditation, till, by losing both sleep and
appetite,

appetite, I was confined to my chamber, and in extreme danger.

The politeness and liberality with which I was treated, secured my person more effectually than the heaviest bolts, or the closest doubly-grated windows of the strongest prison. From these I should probably have meditated an escape, but Mr. Rightly held me by the spell of confidence—the magic of gratitude—which, to an honourable mind, is the most powerful of all enchantments. I passed my time in the society of a worthy man, and an excellent, charming woman, till sickness overwhelmed me; even then their attentions did not diminish; for that which was originally the effect of good-nature and politeness, now became the genuine exertion of the purest humanity.

I lingered several days, before my illness began to abate in the smallest degree: when the violence of the fever had exhausted itself, a circumstance occurred which gave a new aspect to my situation—This was no other than an unexpected and happy reverse in Mr. Randolph's finances. News had arrived that his West-India sugar and cotton plantations had yielded an uncommonly rich crop; and, in addition to this liberal gift of Nature, Fortune had bestowed on him a prize of ten thousand pounds in the State Lottery. The letter which Mr. Rightly had written to the attorney had been unopened till it was sent with one from Mr. Randolph into the country—the latter contained a draft to the amount for which he had originally been arrested; with earnest injunctions to discover my retreat, and to procure my immediate emancipation, whatever the sum might be for which I was in custody. With some management, and the friendly assistance of Mr. Rightly, the action for an escape was compromised—the plaintiff, being a man in reduced circumstances, but sufficiently acquainted with the world to know, that

that the persecutor who wins at a game of law is generally a loser; while his vanquished antagonist, though completely ruined, can laugh at the victor, at the same moment that he smarts from his malevolence.

Having once more obtained the first of human blessings, liberty, I engaged a place in a stage-coach, and in the afternoon set out for Bristol. My health was so much impaired by sickness and by sorrow, that change of air and the consolations of friendship were absolutely necessary for its restoration. It is impossible to describe my sensations during the first fifty miles of my long journey.—Amelia's sufferings, —Isabella's mysterious conduct,—and Colonel Aubrey's just displeasure, agonized my mind, and rendered me insensible to all other objects, till an event, as dangerous as it was common, roused me from the lethargy of sorrow, and, for a short period, diverted my melancholy from its long and deep course of gloomy meditation.

Within a few miles of Marlborough, the coachman stopped to water his horses at a small public-house by the road-side.—He quitted his box, after ordering a bowl of hot rum and water, and with the most inconsiderate composure entered the house. The passengers, three beside myself, waited with fear and impatience a considerable time; till one of them, whom Sterne would have denominated a discontented traveller, after damning all stage-coaches, and declaring that more lives were lost, and more horses destroyed by them, than by all other sources of casualty, began to call loudly for the thoughtless guide—but his voice was unregarded; for we saw the coachman, through the kitchen window, contentedly seated by the fire-side, and enjoying his bowl with invincible composure.

The irritated traveller every moment grew more and more inclined to remonstrate; he bawled and
 swore

swore, and in the most violent invectives reprobated the atrocity of that conduct, which exposed the lives of four persons to such imminent danger.—The coachman paid little or no attention to his complaints, till rage got the better of prudence, and he became the angry traveller. The door was thrown open with furious impetuosity, and without waiting for letting down the steps, the impatient and wrathful traveller leaped from the carriage.—He fell; and, by his precipitate speed, so fractured his leg, that he was conveyed to a chamber, groaning and cursing, closing the scene of his bitter resentment in the miserable character of the wounded and repentant traveller!

I quitted the coach and flew to his assistance, when to my infinite surprise I discovered that it was the insolent domestic of the Duke of Heartwing; we had only taken him up at Marlborough, he having proceeded so far on horseback, but being weary, preferred the ease of a stage-coach during the remainder of his journey. The darkness of the hour had prevented my seeing his features, which, though distorted by agony, on entering the chamber I instantly recognized. I started back: reflection told me that my enemy was not in a condition to bear reproaches; and, lest resentment should for a moment get the better of humanity, I again descended to the kitchen, where I had left the coachman finishing his morning draught.

After dispatching a messenger to Marlborough for a surgeon, I discovered to my great disappointment, that the stage-coach had departed during the scene of confusion, the guide being apprehensive that disagreeable consequences would arise from his neglect, and the accident which it had occasioned.

Upon inquiry I found that the domestic had obtained his reward for apprehending me, and was proceeding to Bath, for the purpose of engaging a house,
and

and arranging accommodations, to receive the Duke of Heartwing, who was to leave London on the following day. After giving orders that every thing should be done for the sufferer's convenience, I quitted the public-house, and on foot once more set out for Bath. My road led across the downs; the weather was stormy, the sky thick and cloudy: I had pistols, loaded, about me; and, being equally a stranger to hope as to fear, I proceeded without the smallest apprehension of danger.

C H A P. VIII.

I HAD not walked more than a mile, when I was suddenly overtaken by two men on horseback; they slackened their pace as they passed me, and stopping short, entered into conversation. The moon was just beginning to rise, and its faint beams at intervals penetrated the scattered clouds, which were borne rapidly along by a keen and boisterous wind. I could perceive that the horsemen were well mounted; and they had also light sufficient to discover that I was equipped as a pedestrian. Several questions, or rather observations, passed on both sides, I was glad to find companions, and that the strangers seemed inclined to accompany me over the wide and solitary downs which lay before us.

One of the travellers dismounted, and leading his horse, walked slowly on beside me. The other kept a few paces before us, at times joining in conversation, and looking about him with more than common precaution; till, suddenly checking his horse, he exclaimed, addressing his companion, "By G—d, it will soon be day-break—Why don't you wish the gentleman a good journey."

At this instant my walking associate presented a pistol, and demanded my money. I had never ceased to grasp mine within my coat pocket since the horsemen

men first overtook me ; the highwayman perceived my intention to defend myself, and instantly fired ; his pistol flashed in the pan ; I returned the shot with success, for the robber fell ; and a carriage at that moment coming in sight, his dastardly companion set off full speed across the downs towards Salisbury. I soon found that the vehicle was a mail-coach. I called to them to stop, and ran towards the horses' heads, but the guard presenting his blunderbuss, bade me " keep off," or he would fire. The wind whistled too loudly for my voice to be distinctly heard, and I had no alternative but that of mounting the wounded highwayman's horse, and proceeding towards Bath with all possible expedition.

Arriving at Devizes, I stopped at the first inn, and inquired for the landlord, in order to acquaint him with what had happened ; but I had scarcely entered the house when a courier, with two assistants, seized me ; and vociferating—" This is the rascal who robbed my lady," dragged me into a parlour, locked the door, and made me a prisoner.

Rage and consternation at first rendered me incapable of resisting their violence ; but reason soon whispered that anger is never the associate of innocence ; and, that if I would extricate myself from this new dilemma, I must act with cool deliberate fortitude. After a few moments of reflection, I calmly enquired upon what grounds they suspected my honesty. " Look at me," said I, addressing the courier ; " do I appear equipped for the office of a highwayman—without either boots, or spurs, or a disguise of any description ? "

" I know your horse," replied the courier ; " I will swear to him amongst a thousand."

" Will you also swear to my person ? " said I, with a smile which I could not suppress, when I observed the assured confidence of my accuser.

" I know

" I know nothing about your person," said he ; " you wore a black crape over your face ; and your boots might easily have been disposed of, to give a colour to your story, in case of detection. We should not have been so rigorous if you had not fired into the chaise, and terrified my lady."

My pockets were rifled ; when the two pistols, one loaded and the other discharged, corroborated the evidence against me. I was now conducted into a drawing-room, in order to ascertain whether the lady who had been robbed could identify my person. Little regarding the event of such a trial, and certain that all which I could say would be misconstrued, while prejudice prepossessed the minds of my accusers, I attended the domestics without hesitation, and in a few moments was ushered into the presence of the trembling Lady Emily Delvin.

She viewed me attentively ; but with that sort of freezing contempt which did not condescend to recognize an old acquaintance in distress. I waited to see how far her inhumanity would lead her, when aided by the stern auxiliaries pride and resentment. I had forgot that few women ever forgive an instance of personal contempt : I had been too honest when Lady Emily distinguished me by her notice ; and she now considered me as too much in her power to escape that punishment which was due to my insensibility.

I fixed my eyes on her's with calm and steady fortitude.—She neither blushed nor hesitated.

" Yes," said she with easy effrontery, " it is the man—I am almost certain that it is the same figure, though his dress has been changed. I think the countenance is also very like."

" The highwayman's face was covered with black crape, my lady," interrupted the courier.

Lady Emily seemed rather disconcerted—" The fellow's complexion might have deceived you," said she,

she, averting her eyes, and no longer able to encounter the steady gaze of innocence. I could not suppress a smile, which was the effect of my secret triumph.

“Lady Emily,” said I, “is it possible that you can feign at a moment so critical, so menacing to my safety?”

She drew up her form, and, exalting her eyebrows with the most insulting barbarity, replied—
“This is not your *first* offence; and I consider myself bound by the law of retribution to punish your ingratitude.”

While she concluded these words she quitted the room, and left me at the mercy of her insolent agents. As she departed I could not help repeating a silly stanza which I had written at a very early age, and which, till that hour, had never since recurred to my memory.—

O woman! greatest friend or foe,
Thou source of bliss or evil
To man, the certain weal or woe,
An angel or a devil!
Since mother Eve, the sex has been
To wide creation given,
To make this busy bustling scene
A very Hell or Heaven!

CHAP. IX.

I WAS immediately conveyed to prison, there to wait till several messengers, who were dispatched in search of the wounded highwayman, should return either to detect me in a fabricated story, or to confirm my innocence of the charge alleged against me.

I was scarcely vexed at my situation.—Having so frequently been the victim of false appearances, this event did not excite the least emotion. The effron-

tery of Lady Emily impressed my mind much more than the accusation against me. I recollected the earliest opinion which she left upon my memory, when she discarded and condemned to death the gentle intelligent Chance, to make room for a trifling, insignificant stranger. The conclusion may not be far removed from probability, that the bosom which can treat with cruelty an attached and faithful dog, would not hesitate to persecute a neglectful and offending lover with equal rancour, and equal perseverance.

Waiting patiently for the result of the inquiries set on foot, I began to imagine that my existence was ordained to be one perpetual scene of trial; and that all my efforts to counteract the will of fate must prove ineffectual: with this idea, which might be authorised by many a predestinarian, whose opinions have been confirmed by the caprices of nature, I resigned myself to the unwearied hand of persecution, neither seeking to repel nor hoping to arrest the arrows of destruction.

As I have before remarked, the muse never forsook me, when fortune was most severe: I no sooner entered my prison than, with no light but that which a grated window afforded, I wrote the following little ode, in humble imitation of Pope's juvenile production:

How blest is he, who born to tread
The silent paths of sweet repose,
Finds peace beneath the rural shed,
Which pomp ne'er knows,

Who roves, with independent mind,
O'er hills and meads and flow'ry plains,
That feast on Nature's lap to find,
Which pride disdains.

How blest! to sing, and talk, and smile,
The busy envious world forgot,
To fear no lurking stings of guile,
In his low cot.

W. en

When high the matin lark is seen
 With flutt'ring wings, and shrilly song,
 He saunters o'er the dewy green,
 And fears no wrong.

And when the sultry sun flames high,
 He seeks the rural shade or dell,
 No fierce banditti lurking nigh,
 With murd'rous spell.

As ev'ning's crimson shadows fade,
 And twilight spreads its mantle grey,
 He plods along the upland glade,
 Serenely gay.

Then on some pallet, clean and low,
 He sleeps, nor dreams of ills the while;
 And when the eastern mountains glow,
 He wakes to smile.

He shuns the pride of wealth and birth,
 No vassal's lord, no tyrant's slave;
 His cot the haunt of modest worth,
 The turf his grave.

In the course of the day the messengers returned; the wounded highwayman had either contrived to escape, or had been conveyed from the spot where he fell by his confederates. The track of blood, however, corroborated my report, and a farther evidence confirmed my innocence. This was no other than the master of a small public-house, where the highwayman had supped the preceding night, who remembered the horse, and positively swore that I was not the person whom he had seen mount him a little before midnight. This clear and voluntary evidence was considerably strengthened by the general character of the witness, who was known by the name of Honest Ned, of the Black Lion.

As soon as I was set at liberty, I thought it most advisable to make the best of my way out of the town. Curiosity having drawn together a vast concourse of people, I obtained information of a pri-

vate road which led through lanes and meadows, and again set out on foot to avoid every impediment, and to elude observation.

I had some time lost sight of the town, when compunction struck upon my heart for having neglected to reward the honest fellow whose voluntary interference had snatched me from so unpleasant a dilemma. Actuated by that strong and unaccountable impulse which through life has led me on to peril, I turned suddenly back, and resolved to visit the habitation of Honest Ned. I inquired the way, and was directed across a wide common, near half a mile from the high road.—I hastened thither with less prudence than expedition: it was almost dark when I entered the house; the landlord had not yet returned from Devizes, and there was no person at home excepting an old woman, who was deaf and nearly foolish, and a lad, who either could not or would not give me any satisfactory information.

Having been too much engaged during the day to think of eating, I now began to find hunger an unsatisfied companion. Some cold meat and an excellent tankard of ale being set before me, I commenced my meal with an appetite which rendered the most homely fare exquisitely delicious. I had scarcely begun to eat, when taking the tankard which foamed with nut-brown liquor, I perceived that the handle was slightly stained with crimson.—A sudden horror seized me! I examined it minutely; the mark was evidently made by a bloody hand. My consternation conjured up a thousand wild ideas: the house was lonesome—the night dark—the wind howled over the common—and no carriage was to be had nearer than three miles.

In the confusion of the day I had forgot to demand my pistols, which had been taken from me, and my situation was painfully perplexing—it was dangerous to stay, it would have been cowardly to depart. I
knew,

knew, by fatal experience, that conjecture was apt to mislead where appearances were suspicious. The reflection lulled my alarm, and I resolved to await the arrival of Honest Ned, let the consequences be what they may.

Midnight came, and my landlord was still absent. I questioned the old woman—but she returned answers so incoherent, that I soon found my inquiries useless. The night continued stormy; the rain pattered against the casements, and the wind whistled over the heath more shrilly than ever. I seated myself by the expiring embers of a wood fire, the house affording no bed for travellers, and being drowsy after a day of such busy inquietude, was sinking into a heavy slumber, when a deep groan awakened me. I sprung from my chair, and listened attentively—no noise was heard but the bleak blast which with short intervals yelled round the low roof; and the sonorous respiration of the old woman, who snored by the fire-side in the adjoining kitchen. After again listening during several minutes, I resumed my seat, collected the dying embers, replenished the hearth with a fresh log of fuel, and overpowered by fatigue of mind and body, again prepared to slumber.

C H A P. X.

I HAD slept some time, when I was startled by a sudden noise, which at first I could scarcely account for, till a second tap at the window-shutter convinced me that some one wished to enter. I informed the old woman, who instantly roused herself, and proceeded to open the door. I kept myself as much as possible concealed, only peeping through a crevice in the thin wainscot, which divided the parlour from the kitchen. The landlord entered, followed by a well-dressed man: they were both booted and spurred.

red. The lad was ordered to take their horses into the stable, and I listened with anxious attention to all their proceedings.

They ascended a small staircase, which was nearly opposite to the aperture of observation, the old woman carrying a light, and still half asleep. I heard them open a chamber door. This was no moment for childish apprehension: the hour, the place, the blood-stained tankard, and the scene before me, demanded more than ordinary resolution. I quitted the parlour, and stealing up the stairs approached the chamber door, where I heard confused whisperings, but nothing distinctly. I now recollected that, when the landlord entered, I had observed his companion place his pistols on the kitchen table. Again I descended softly, and arming myself, resolved to explore this mysterious adventure, or to perish in the trial. Once more at the threshold of the bed-chamber, I heard distinctly half-smothered groans, and the low deep hum of voices, almost incessant. "Jesus, have mercy! how he bleeds!" exclaimed the old woman. "Peace, you fool," cried one of the men, whom by his accent I judged to be the landlord: "the thing will soon be done; the knives are sharp, and necessity has no law." Again an agonized groan made my blood almost freeze with horror. No longer able to remain a patient listener under such circumstances, I suddenly threw open the door, and rushed into the apartment, when the objects presented to my view instantly unravelled the mystery. The person who had arrived with the landlord was a surgeon, who at the moment of my entering the room was extracting a ball from the shoulder of a young man, who lay in the bed, pale, and evidently in extreme torture.

Though there remained not a doubt in my own mind, that the wounded person was the highwayman, whom I had met on Marlborough Downs, I felt every

every vein in my heart throb with pity when I beheld his agonising situation. Every drop of blood that trickled from his wound, seemed to wash away the enormity of his transgression. He raised his languid eyes, with imploring contrition;—he seemed to recollect, and to fear me. I threw my pistols on a chair which stood near the bed, and with involuntary commiseration inquired, whether I could be of service.

The young man, for though checked in his career of guilt, he was not much older than myself, with a feeble voice thanked me: the surgeon shook his head: the landlord hung his brow, abashed and self-reproved, I was no longer in doubt: the fact was evident. The surgeon performed his operation with skill and humanity. I paid him for his trouble, desired him to come again, and, without asking any questions, he departed for Bath, from whence the landlord had brought him. It was time that the exhausted sufferer should endeavour to sleep. I whispered an assurance that he had nothing to fear from me; and again descended to the parlour.

Requesting honest Ned to bring another tankard of his best ale, we sat down together to drink it. On finishing my draught, and presenting the handle to my companion, he perceived the mark of blood which was still visible. His face grew wan,—his hand trembled,—he could scarcely lift the tankard;—he drank little, and with pretended awkwardness spilt the remainder, so as to completely wash away the stain. “Honest Ned!” said I smiling, “is that the way you rub off scores? You should have been less precipitate, if only to remind you of the debt of kindness which your guest will scarcely be able to repay. Let the tankard be washed clean, and we will drink to the reformation of your wounded lodger.” The lad was dispatched to the cellar, and the landlord began to feel compunction. “If you will

have patience to hear my story," said he, "you will acquit my conscience of every dishonest motive."

"Proceed," said I.

The landlord swallowed a large draught to mend his shattered resolution; and then, after many "hems" and "ha's," and hesitating "wells," and "so's," and "as your honour is thinking—and as I was a-saying,"—at length began to confess the whole business.

"I must tell you, cried he, "before I begin my story, that the poor gentleman above, is a gentleman: and though I am mightily afraid that he has taken the road of his betters, and turned to wicked ways—"

"That is to say, to *high-ways*," interrupted I, smiling. The narrator continued:—

"You must know that the silly young man has many grand relations, aye and rich ones: his mother is a great gentlewoman, worth a power of money, which she means to leave to this untoward boy. And so, you must know, as I was a-telling you, all in high style, comes he to Bath; and wishing to outdo all outdoings, he brings with him a new-fashioned carbuncle, and two blood nags;—nice cattle, your honour!"

"I don't comprehend you," said I.

"Why," continued the landlord, "a go-by-the-ground, with two wheels, just for all the world like a cart: why you may see um as thick as hops along the Western road: scarce a day passes, but I meet one of your quality-folks flying along, without a head, who but they, for the benefit of the dust."

"Without a head! I am now more at a loss than ever," said I.

"Why they have no tilt to kiver um from the weather. Sometimes indeed they've a got a pair of little bits of wings, for all the world like a butterfly—"

"You mean a curricule," said I.

"Aye

"Aye, a chronicle," cried Ned, nodding over his tankard, and more than half asleep. "So, as I was a-telling you, to Bath he comes; who but he; as flashy as may be, and as gay as a lord. He was soon made much of; and taken up and squat down, like any thing. He was the very town-talk of all Bath; visited and idled by the quality all the way from Lansdown to the Avon. Every house was welcome to him, and every lady was at his service. He'd a rare time on't to be sure, and enough to do, God knows. But the evil day was at hand, as parson said last Sunday, and he's as good a christian as ever broke bread, let the other be where he will. He has been rector of our parish ever since his great great great grandfather's time, a matter of a hundred and fifty years, or thereabouts; and he preaches every Sunday, who but he, as fresh as a four-year-old, and as sober as a judge: 'tis'nt all your fat bishops that can say as much, your honour."

"True; but go on with your story."

"So, as I was a-telling you," continued honest Ned, "who should fall in love with him but my Lady Emily Delver! O! your honour, she's a deep one! She can do a bit of dirty work as well as her neighbours. If she isn't as arrant a knave—as ever was hanged, I'm no conjuror!"

"I believe you," said I: "go on."

"There was a man, not long ago, tried at our sises, who was sent beyond-seas for a less matter than these quality ladies does daily, every mother's son of 'em, or I know who's belied most damnably: God forgive me for swearing, but I can never think of their ways but my blood boils, as it were. Why, there was a lord at Bath not long since, that was found out in one of his odd tricks, and a got himself killed as a sample for others!"

"Well, well, go on with your story," said I.

"As I was a-telling you, my Lady Delver, and her

her accomplishers, gets him to gaming-table : such doings ! Night after night, day after day, Sundays and working-days, on goes they, till off goes he ! For, as I hope to be saved, they did 'nt leave him a brass farthing to pay turnpike. So then, aping his betters, he takes up with bad company, and comes and lodges with I. And, as parson says, " charity covereth a multitude of sins," I thought a little matter on't shewn to a poor body in distress, might be of service to him. And to keep him from making away with himself, for one misfortune seldom comes alone, I lends him my brown nag : there isn't a cleverer bit of blood in the county, your honour. I bought him of a groom that took him for part of his wagers, when his master, he was one of your quality too, morrised off, and paid his creditors nothing in the pound. I'll tell you how it happened."

" At a future period," said I : " finish your story first, and then we will talk of other matters."

" So as I was a-telling you, the young spendthrift rogue, being as dull as a cat, and as poor as a church mouse, I lends him my brown nag ; and he buys him, after a trial, with a promissory note for forty pounds, to be paid when he comes to years of discretion—"

" On doomsday," interrupted I gravely.

" Why may be so, or Midsummer, or Michaelmas, or some such day. Hard days for us poor tenants : the quality don't mind how we get it, so as they have it. Our lord of the manor has got an old steward, — a bitter one as ever broke bread ! as sharp as a needle, and as cunning as a fox, your honour. As sure as pay-day arrives, here comes he, and away goes I, to fetch my canvass bag, no sooner full than empty ! Then I toils and works like carrier's horse against next pay-day. But I'm getting out of my story again."

A draught of ale replenished his memory, and he continued the narrative.

" So

" So, as I was a-telling you, he was never at rest waking nor sleeping. Always grumbling and making one as hippish as may be. And there used to come a sort of a scape-grace to consult with him; an odd haram-scare-'em chap; a sort of a bastard sprig of quality, your honour; one of your fortune-hunters. Bath swarms with 'em. Only last summer a young lady absconds with one of um; a married man! But miss was one of the gay ones; she was a deep hand at an odd trick, and as loving as may be: they say that's the way with all your quality ladies."

" Well, and what became of your lodger and your brown nag?" said I.

" Why last night, just as clock struck eleven, within a minute or so, out goes he, with the devil at his heels, and I follows him."

" At his heels?" said I.

" Close as wax, your honour, till he comes to stable door. In a goes, and saddles the brown nag, cursing and damning all the while; who but he? Then I begins to argify the matter, but he was as deaf as a post, and as obstinate as a mule: till seizing the bridle, up goes he, and a'ter him goes I, bawling and swearing, till I could hear the hoofs of the beast no longer."

" Well, and how came he home?" said I.

" In cart, your honour. Many a man has gone to a worse home, in a better carriage. 'Tisn't all gold that glitters. So as I was a-telling you, midnight coming on apace, and a bitter night 'twas, and young spark being inclined to play truant, I begins to grow dubious, and in a twinkling takes cart, and sets out, who but I, a'ter my brown nag. I soon came to Marlborough Downs, and there, a little after day-break, I finds young squire groaning and bleeding, who but he. I vow and declare, my heart yearned when I saw him in such a pitiful plight. The sight of cart made him caper like a parched pea, your
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honour, as though he thought it ominous ; so up goes he, and a'ter him goes I ; and off we set, along by-ways and lanes, and such like, till his eyes once more spied out our old black lion."

" What could tempt him to so rash and criminal an action ?" said I.

" Example, your honour ; high company led on to high ways ; and one of the gang put it into his head to rob my lady :—so he swears to do it, who but he ! and away they go, the devil at their heels, just before her ladyship ; up to the window goes he, and into a quandary goes she. Then, 'squire axes for a purse which my lady had before taken from somebody else, and so the matter ended."

By the time that honest Ned concluded his long-spun narrative, the sun began to enter our casement. We parted. I threw myself into a wicker chair by a blazing fire, and sunk into a deep sleep, which lasted several hours.

C H A P. XI.

AS soon as I awoke I repaired to the chamber of the unfortunate and rash sufferer. He shrunk at the sight of me, and seemed overwhelmed with compunction. I entered into earnest conversation with him, and proposed, if he felt himself capable of bearing the motion of a carriage, that he should remove nearer to Bath, for the advantage of chirurgical assistance. " Let me perish here," said he ; " why prolong a few short hours of life, to suffer a public and ignominious death ?" His agitated voice, the tortures of mental, united with corporeal sufferings, subdued my resentment, and I promised to conceal his crime, with the hope that his remaining days would be devoted to repentance.

" Alas !" said he, stretching forth his arms, and clasping his trembling hands, " I am more unfortunate

nate than criminal. Robbed at a gaming table, I sought to recover that which had been stolen from me ; but my hand resisted the office of a murderer ; the pistol was discharged at random, and I failed in the first ; yes, I call God to witness ! the first dishonest act that my mind ever meditated. My associate and counsellor reproved my timidity, and attributed that trepidation to cowardice, which was in fact the effect of conscious horror. I would have left him. I proposed relinquishing the fatal expedition : Then, said he, “ *my life is at your mercy, you will turn evidence, and I shall suffer for my credulous reliance on a mean designing coward.*” The idea rendered me desperate. To this infamous associate I was indebted thirty pounds, won at a public hazard-table. He had demanded payment from day to day ; he now urged me with threats, and at length taunted me with reproaches : called me a tame and whining blockhead, who, with Fortune eternally before me, turned from her to be miserable. I dared not resent his conduct ; he had me in the toil ; my *life* was in his hands : — we crossed the Downs together. I confessed my want of resolution to commit so vile a deed. We stopped our horses at a small distance from the high road, and for some minutes conversed upon the subject. No other carriage passed and you appeared in sight. “ You cannot fear a foot-passenger,” said my companion : “ try once more, and if you have any manly courage in your nature, prove it.” We joined in conversation ; — you know the rest. — I fell !”

The effort overwhelmed him, and he sunk upon his pillow totally exhausted.

A considerable time elapsed before he had strength to utter another syllable. I intreated him to compose his mind, and to persevere in that conscious self-correction, which would be his surest safeguard in every future scene of worldly trial. He feebly articulated his grateful acknowledgments ; and, after he had
 swallowed

swallowed some light nourishment, he endeavoured to take that rest, of which despair had, during the preceding night, entirely deprived him. Previous to his dropping asleep, he requested that in the course of the day I would write a letter to his mother. I promised; and taking up a book which lay in the chamber, seated myself near the window to await a second visit from the surgeon, whom I had desired again to examine his wound, before the expiration of twelve hours.

The story of the young criminal strongly interested my feelings; while more than half his load of guilt seemed to devolve on his hardened accomplice. My reflection naturally turned towards the gaming-table; the vortex of destruction, the nursery of vice, the school of licentiousness: and I shuddered to remember that a propensity which degrades even a masculine education, should be so unblushingly adopted and exercised by those lovely and once feminine beings in whom profligacy appears with tenfold deformity.

Half the calamities which have befallen me through my journey of affliction, I may attribute to the gaming table;—myself only once an actor in the sombre scene of shuffling and deception, yet doomed for ever to be a mourning spectator of its fatal consequences.

The invalid fell into a profound sleep, from which he was awakened by a second visit from the surgeon, who came to examine his wound. The symptoms were alarming: his fever was high, and his conversation evinced strong marks of increasing delirium. I attended the unbinding of his wound, and the comments which followed distressed me infinitely.

“The ball was aimed with extraordinary malignity,” said the surgeon. “It might have penetrated a more mortal part, but none that could inflict severer torture. I apprehend that the gentleman was wounded by a footpad. The landlord informed me so on our way from Bath.”

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I made no reply. Indeed I could not contradict the assertion, without declaring the criminality of my imprudent and agonized victim.

The surgeon, after a short pause, continued :—" I have seen this gentleman frequently, during the last season, at Bath ; I recollect his countenance perfectly ; and I advise you, Sir, if you are his friend, to dispatch a messenger with an account of his precarious situation, to his nearest connections : I really cannot answer for his life twelve hours."

My blood crept cold through every vein :—a sensation undescribably horrible possessed my mind, and I looked towards the bed with the most painful compunction. Every deep-fetched sigh, every half-stifled groan which issued from his tortured bosom, wrung the fibres of my heart : I would gladly have exchanged situations with the sufferer ; and even envied him the opening prospect of a peaceful grave. Alas, Rosanna ! it was more than common pity that occasioned these emotions ;—sympathy,—instinctive affection,—the terror of something fatally interesting, and still unknown, seized on my senses :—I was strangely, wildly possessed, by fear and solicitude. The surgeon departed. I once more approached the bed, and undrawing the curtains, fixed my gaze on the pale features of the object before me. A tear started from my eyes ;—I did not blush at my weakness ; it was the voluntary sensation of pure and irresistible nature.

I frequently inquired the young highwayman's name, but no person in the family would satisfy my curiosity. Before evening his fever augmented ; his countenance changed, and his voice became so feeble, that the few incoherent words which he uttered were scarcely audible. I concluded that he could not survive many hours ; and the idea of seeing him expire was too terrible to be supported. After watching him till past midnight, and finding him every moment
grow

grow worse and worse, I requested honest Ned to lend me his brown nag, in order that I might immediately set out for Bath: the landlord readily complied, and we repaired to the stable to saddle him for my expedition.

"Ah, master!" cried my host of the Black Lion, "young 'squire has made but a very sorry business on t! He will die as sure as my name's Ned; and, what is worst of all, I'm afraid I shall have the expence of burying him, and doctor's bill to pay into the bargain. Ah, your honour! 'tis no wonder that doctors live by other people's dying; they have all the game in their own hands, and dead men tell no tales, as one may say. There is always mischief when doctor's in the wind;—for, as the old saying goes, " 'tis an *ill* wind that blows nobody *good*." But as I was a-telling you, I'm afraid 'squire is not long for this world,—and when he takes leave of us, who's to pay piper? He can't lie above-ground."

" 'Tis a pity you ever took him in as a lodger," said I.

"Why, your honour, I take in every body that comes to my house. The poorest higgler that stops at my door, walks away lighter than a-comes; and the greatest lords often go to worse houses, or they are belied most confoundedly. Ah, your honour! it was that cursed Jezabel Lady Delver that brought young 'squire to shame. A poor body would be whipped from parish to parish, for a less matter than quality does every day in the year. 'Squire will be off as sure as a gun, your honour."

"I hope not," said I; "though I confess that the symptoms are at present alarming."

"Your honour will have but a dismal ride on't," cried the landlord, leaning on the back of his brown nag, and looking more discontentedly than usual. "The sky is as dark as pitch, and the wind blows a hurricane. You must cross our heath, and along by castle-

castle-wall, before you get into the western road ; and a more solitary place is 'nt to be met with in the whole county. Lord bless'e, your honour, how you would stare if you was but to hear the comical stories our country-folks tell about a murder, and two ghosts that walk there—who but they—as frightful as may be !”

“ I do not believe in tales of superstition,” said I ; “ they are the mere inventions of ignorance and fear : —a legion of ghosts should not prevent my passing the heath, or the castle-wall, in case I was inclined to do either.—Evil spirits are every day growing so common, that we meet them in all societies.”

“ Sure !” cried the landlord. “ And why don't'e try to pray um into the Red Sea ?”

“ Prayers are out of fashion, honest Ned,” answered I. “ The evil spirits I speak of set religion at defiance.”

“ Sure !—But this ghost, which I was a-speaking of, is for all the world like a sperit,” cried the landlord, looking fearfully round him. “ Parson hinted somewhat about it in pulpit last Midsummer-eve : for a said that sperits of darkness walked upon the face of the earth. We all knew well enough what a meant ; and since that day the stoutest-hearted be rather timerse about going over heath, or near castle-walls, with the devil at their heels, as one may say. Shall I tell you the history about Ghost and Grey doublet ? a walks always, so country-folks say, when 'tis as dark as pitch !—Bad deeds always come to light, your honour.”

The landlord proceeded to saddle his brown nag while he related the story, which, in a leisure hour, I since verified as follows :

THE DOUBLET OF GREY.

I.

Beneath the tall turrets that nod o'er the dell,
 A dark forest now blackens the mound;
 Where often, at dawn-light, the deep-sounding bell
 Tolls sadly and solemn a soul-parting knell;
 While the ruin re-echoes the sound.

II.

Yet long has the castle been left to decay,
 For its ramparts are skirted with thorn;
 And no one by moon-light will venture that way,
 Left they meet the poor maid, in her doublet of grey,
 As she wanders, all pale and forlorn!

III.

"And why should she wander? O tell me, I pray
 "And, oh! why does she wander alone?"
 Beneath the dark ivy, now left to decay,
 With no shroud, but a coarse simple doublet of grey,
 Lies her bosom as cold as a stone.

IV.

Time was when no form was so fresh, or so fair,
 Or so comely, when richly array'd:
 She was tall, and the jewels that blaz'd in her hair
 Could no more with her eye's living lustre compare,
 Than a rose with the cheek of the maid.

V.

She lov'd!—but the youth, who had vanquish'd her heart,
 Was the heir of a peasant's hard toil;
 For no treasure had he; yet, a stranger to art,
 He would oft by a look to the damsel impart
 What the damsel receiv'd with a smile.

VI.

Where'er to the wake or the chase she would go,
 The young Theodore loiter'd that way;
 Did the sun-beams of summer invitingly glow,
 Or across the bleak common the winter winds blow,
 Still he watch'd till the closing of day.

VII.

Her parents so wealthy, her kindred so proud,
 Heard the story of love with dismay;
 They rav'd, and they storm'd, by the Virgin they vow'd
 That, before they would see her so wedded, a shroud
 Should be Madeline's bridal array.

VIII.

One night, it was winter, all dreary and cold,
 And the moon beams shone pale and clear;
 When she open'd her lattice, in hopes to behold
 Her Theodore's form, when the turret-bell toll'd,
 And the blood in her heart froze with fear.

IX.

Near the green-mantled moat her stern father she spied,
 And a grave he was making with speed;
 The light, which all silver'd the castle's strong side,
 Display'd his wild gestures, while madly he cry'd —
 'Curst caitiff! thy bosom shall bleed!'

X.

Distracted, forlorn, from the castle of pride,
 She escap'd at the next close of day,
 Her soft-blushing cheek, with dark berries all dy'd,
 With a spear on her shoulder, a sword by her side,
 And her form in a *doublet of grey*.

XI.

She travers'd the courts, not a vassal was seen,
 Through the gate hung with ivy she flew;
 The sky was unclouded, the air was serene,
 The moon shot its rays, the long vistas between,
 And her doublet was spangled with dew.

XII.

O'er the cold breezy downs to the hamlet she hied,
 Where the cottage of Theodore stood;
 For its low roof of rushes she oft had descried,
 When she drank of the brook that foam'd wild by its side,
 While the keen hunters travers'd the wood.

XIII.

The sky on a sudden grew dark, and the wind,
 With a deep fullen murmur, rush'd by;
 She wander'd about, but no path cou'd she find,
 While horrors on horrors encompass'd her mind
 When she found that no shelter was nigh.

XIV.

And now, on the dry wither'd fern, she cou'd hear
The hoofs of swift horses rebound ;
She stopp'd and she listen'd, she trembled with fear,
When a voice most prophetic and sad met her ear,
And she shudder'd and shrunk at the sound.

XV.

" 'Tis here we will wait," cry'd the horseman ; " for see
" How the moon with black clouds is o'erspread ;
" No hut yields a shelter, no forest a tree—
" This heath shall young Theodore's bridal couch be,
" And the cold earth shall pillow his head.

XVI.

" Hark ! some one approaches :—now stand we aside,
" We shall know him—for see, the moon's clear ;
" In a doublet of grey he now waits for his bride,
" But, ere dawn-light, the Carle shall repent of his pride,
" And his pale mangled body rest here."

XVII.

Again, the moon shrouded in clouds, o'er the plain
The horsemen were scatter'd far wide ;
The night became stormy, the fast falling rain
Beat hard on her bosom, which dar'd not complain,
And the torrent roll'd swift by her side.

XVIII.

Now clashing of swords overwhelm'd her with dread,
While her ear met the deep-groan of death ;
" Yield, yield thee, bold peasant," the murderer said,
" This turf with thy heart's dearest blood shall be red,
" And thy bones whiten over the heath."

XIX.

Now shrieking, despairing, she starts from the ground,
And her spear, with new strength, she lets go :
She aim'd it at random, she felt it rebound
From the sure hand of Fate, which inflicted the wound,
As it drank the life-blood of her foe.

XX.

The morning advanced, o'er the pale chilling skies
Soon the warm rosy tints circled wide ;
But, oh God ! with what anguish, what terror she flies,
When her father, all cover'd with wounds, she descries
With her lover's pale corpse by his side!

XXI.

XXI.

Half frantic she fell on her parent's cold breast,
 And she bath'd her white bosom with gore;
 Then, in anguish the form of young Theodore press'd—
 "I will yet be thy bride, in the grave we will rest,"
 She exclaim'd; and she suffer'd no more.

XXII.

Now o'er the wild heath when the winter winds blow,
 And the moon-silver'd fern branches wave,
 Pale Theodore's spectre is seen gliding slow,
 As he calls on the damsel in accents of woe,
 Till the bell warns him back to his grave.

XXIII.

And while the deep sound echoes over the wood,
 Now the villagers shrink with dismay;
 For, as legends declare, where the castle once stood,
 Mid the ruins, by moonlight, all cover'd with blood,
 Shrieks the maid—in *her doublet of grey*!

C H A P. XII.

THE landlord having saddled the brown nag, I once more repaired to the chamber where the young highwayman lay to all appearance expiring. I addressed him several times, and as he made me no answer, I concluded that he was incapable of speaking. I touched his cheek—it was cold; and the damp of death glistened on his forehead.

It was impossible to describe what I felt at that moment—The criminal had so much to urge in extenuation of his conduct; and I knew by fatal experience how easily unsuspecting minds are entrapped by the subtilty of the vicious, that I almost considered myself as culpable in having deprived of existence a being who might have reformed, and become a valuable member of society. Three times I closed the curtains, and three times again opened them, to take a last look at the unfortunate sufferer; but I found that the longer I contemplated his pale
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and distorted features, the more my resolution seemed to diminish. I therefore, with a painful effort, quitted the room, and descended to the kitchen.

The landlord again advised me to delay my journey till the morning : " I don't know why," said he, " but somehow I have a strange foreboding that you'll never get safe to Bath. The weather is stormy, and the rain pours in torrents ; one wou'dn't turn a dog out on such a night, much less your honour. I would no more think of crossing our heath than of flying ; and I'm none of your faint-hearted ones neither."

" What should molest me ? " said I ; for I began to suspect that honest Ned knew of more wanderers on the heath than those which the story of the ghost had discovered.

" Why, that's more than I can say," replied the landlord. " 'Tis a lonesome road, and there isn't a star to be seen from east to west, as one may say. Only hark how the wind whistles ! This is a rare night for ghosts and witches, and such like gentry. I'll warrant all the old women in the parish are at this moment telling frightful stories round their fire-sides, about goblins, and fairies, and murders. — You had better stay and drink a tankard of our ale, your honour. Zooks, how the chimnies rattle ! — Why, the very casements will be beat in by the hail and the rain ! Well, this is a night ! Why, I question whether there has been such another in the memory of man ! "

" The tempest is too violent to last long," said I : " before I have crossed the heath it will be over. I am used to storms and accustomed to difficulties. — The rain and hail will not hurt me."

" Ah ! your honour ! " replied the landlord, shaking his wife head, " there is nothing so dangerous as being fool-hardy. If young 'squire had but followed

followed my advice, he wou'dn't have been in such a terrible plight, as one may say. Howsomever, if you be determined to brave both the wind and the weather, we will take one more tankard before you go."

"With all my heart," answered I; "but you must bring it directly."

"What say you to a few eggs in it, and a little nutmeg?"

"Very well; be it so."

"It will relish a rasher; and a drop of brandy added will keep the cold out of your stomach."

"Be expeditious then," said I; "for time flies rapidly."

"Fair and softly," cried the landlord; "he stumbles that runs fast, as one may say."

He now took his lantern, and crossing the stable-yard to his beer-cellar, a sudden gust of wind blew open the door, and extinguished the candle. The landlord returned:—"Most haste, worse speed," cried he, again placing the light in the lantern, and falling forth with his tankard towards the cellar. In a few minutes he came back.—"Good Lord! this is a night indeed!" exclaimed he—"The tiles are flying from the roof—who but they? and the trees in our barton crack and rustle as though they were torn up by the very roots! I warrant the ruins of the old castle are making a fine rumpus: there won't be one stone left a-top of t'other! Lord a mercy! my blood runs cold to think on't! such a hurley-burley was never before heard in the heavens! You cannot think of travelling till things be a little quiet."

The ale being ready, I took a draught from the tankard; and after giving the landlord a sum sufficient to defray the funeral expences of the dying man, mounted the brown nag, while his master held
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the bridle, and with many earnest intreaties would have dissuaded me from my purpose.

"Mercy on us! how the doors clap! what a night is this to travel! Only but look at the sky! Why the heath seems for all the world like a grave!—one can't see one's hand before one. Well, he that's born to be hanged will never be drowned; but such a deluge of rain did I never see in all my born days. I suppose you know the way; mind you don't run foul of gibbet—or tumble into marle-pits—And take heed you don't get up to hill among the ruins; you'll be finely maz'd if you ben't careful."

I was just setting off when honest Ned called to me, and desired that I would stop half a minute, "Take another draught," said he, "and let's drink to your safe journey."

I thanked him, but declined drinking any more; "Your good wishes are the same," said I, shaking his hand, as he finished the tankard.

"The wind cuts like a razor!" cried honest Ned; "I can hardly find in my heart to let you go after all; for, give the devil his due, your honour is a worthy gentleman."

The old woman now came hobbling towards us—"For God's sake, master, go up to poor young 'squire," said she.

I guessed the cause of her sudden alarm; I instantly, spurring my horse, broke from the landlord; and as well as the darkness would permit, hastened across the common.

Never did the landlord speak more truly than when he declared that such a night was scarcely to be remembered. But my thoughts were too intently fixed on past events to dread or regard the approach of future calamities. The rain, which had been incessantly falling since twilight, had nearly inundated a great part of the heath, and I was obliged to proceed at a foot-pace till I reached a narrow lane; I knew, by
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the pressure of my horse's hoofs, that I was on a gravel-beaten road ; the splashy turf rendering the sound wholly different. Still I advanced, and still the tempest howled on every side. I could perceive, by the position of my saddle, that we were on an acclivity, and I was ruminating on the story of Madeline with her doublet of grey, when on a sudden a bell tolled, and I started from my reverie to listen.

Again the solemn vibration mingled with the blast, as it rose and fell in its progress over the common. I stopped my horse : the singularity of my situation caused a momentary thrilling through my heart. The bell continued to toll, and the storm yelled more furiously than ever. I began to wish I had followed the wise counsel of honest Ned, and was about to turn my horse, and retrace my dreary path, when I perceived a dim light advancing over the heath at more than a hundred yards distant from the place where I stopped. It moved slowly—I shuddered ! A painful sensation, which has never failed to inform me with prophetic horror, when any event nearly interested my feelings, at that moment chilled my breast. I spurred my horse, and, with a forced and desperate resolution, hastened towards the light, with as much speed as the roads and the situation would permit me.

As I approached the flame, which continued to move onward, sometimes dimmed by torrents pouring from the sky, which not a single star illumined, and at others glaring, as the wind fanned it into new vigour, I observed something white gliding after it.

Conjecture now became almost bewildered ; and I resolved to convince myself by what means such an appearance, at such an hour, and in a place so lonely, could be produced. On approaching the spot, I discovered a hearse drawn by six horses, and ornamented with plumes of white feathers. At that

moment the torch, which an attendant carried before the horses to light their way, by a keen and hurrying blast of wind, was suddenly extinguished. The cavalcade halted, and I stopped to recover from the surprise which it had, in spite of all my resolution, occasioned.

C H A P. XIII.

I **ARRESTED** my steps beside the gloomy cavalcade, and during many minutes had not power to proceed on my journey. The recollection of the state in which I had left the highwayman, and the idea that he was then a corpse, made me shudder while I contemplated the pompous procession before me.

The dawn began faintly to break, and the dim dusky light rendered the surrounding scenery doubly solitary. I looked, awfully impressed, across the heath; the furze and fern were in many places inundated by the heavy and long-continued fall of rain. The wind was less boisterous than it had been on my leaving the Black Lion: but the chains, which were rivetted round the human scare-crow suspended from the gibbet, filled up the pause with a creaking sound, which inspired the mind with a mixture of melancholy and horror, that was undescribable. I stopped for a moment to gaze on the wretched remnant of mortality, parched by the wind and withered by the sun, while the keen blast blew it from side to side, when the bell again vibrated through the air, and fixed my attention. I instantly turned towards the quarter from whence the solemn sound proceeded, and observed, by the grey morning light, the ivy-covered turrets of an ancient village church, just visible above the wood, whose ruined castle my landlord had so minutely and superstitiously described. One-half the mystery of the maid in her grey doublet

was now elucidated; and I well knew that a story of supernatural horror requires only a sombre outline, which time, and the inventive powers of the human mind, will not fail to fill up with the marvellous and terrific.

" 'Tis well that day begins to break," cried the fable torch-bearer; "for we should have been finely bewildered before we got to Devizes: since the fashion of travelling by night has been taken up by the nobility, there is no rest for us gentlemen of the scarf and hat-band."

"Suppose they cannot travel by day," said the other, "what's to be done then? Besides, we need not grumble; for 'tis well known that we make them pay for it in the end."

"And a pretty end they make," added his companion. "There's more fuss about one titled carcase, than about twenty wholesome bodies. But all trades must thrive; and half the great folks we convey home are better dead than living."

"How do you make that out?" cried the gloomy inquirer.

"Why, because many of them live ill, and die well," replied the torch-bearer: "now a poor rascal proves his removal from high blood by the very reverse; for he generally lives well and dies ill. Yet I dare be sworn that yon gibbet bears an honest man than this same corpse of a lord was in his best days."

"He has left but a queer name behind him," said the undertaker.

"No matter for that," replied his companion; "money will buy some folks a character; and I'll warrant his name will be mended, before it appears in our abbey."

"Money!" cried the undertaker—"why he died worse than nothing."

"That was one degree worse than himself," interrupted the torch-bearer—"But your nobles have seldom much to boast of, except the title which they get from their ancestors, and which goes on to their next heir, with little improvement, and still less honour. Why your lords, now-a-days, only squander their estates at the gaming-table; and while they hang a poor thief for taking a purse on the highway, make no more of picking one another's pockets, than I should do of consigning their bones to the hands of the anatomist."

"You don't do so much in that way as you formerly did," cried the torch-bearer.

"The more is the pity," replied the lacquey of death; for there is plenty of stuff for experimental work. Most of our modern bodies are terribly disordered about the heart; a leaden furtout cannot add to their coldness, or do away the ill effects which such subjects leave behind them. Why my lord here, that is travelling home in our death-cart, has a coffin as thick as a stone-wall. But lead is no uncommon thing for the heads of great families."

"You are merry, my slow travellers," said I.

"And yet we have but a sad subject for our mirth," replied the undertaker.

"It is a pity that the corpse which excites your jocularities, cannot hear you," said I.

"He would hear what, probably, he never heard in his life," cried the torch-bearer.

"And what is that?"

"Truth!" answered he. "Your court-born quality, like a certain beast of burden, carry their ears so high, that nothing like reason or good counsel can reach them. They think themselves the lords of their species, and, like the ass in the lion's skin, fancy the whole world is astonished at their power, at the very moment that they are the objects of universal detestation."

"Whose

" Whose corpse do you bear ?" said I.

" Nobody's," answered the undertaker ; " our hearse indeed, bears the body of Viscount Linbourne."

" Lord Linbourne !" repeated I, shuddering with horror. " Is not Lord Linbourne yet buried ? He has been dead these three weeks !"

" Very true," said the undertaker ; but he forgot to pay his debts before his departure ; and his body was detained for the good of his character."

" Arrested !" cried I, with a mixture of surprise and indignation. " His miserable remains insulted, to gratify the revengeful malice of his creditors, and in a Christian country ! Shame ! shame on those laws which authorise such violations of humanity."

" How you stare !" said the torch-bearer, proceeding slowly on, as I walked my horse beside him. " Why there have been instances of bodies being detained for a few hundreds, which were covered with scars received in the defence of their country. Nay, more, I once heard of a great man's suffering the corpse of a beautiful mistress to lie on the bare floor, while the bed, on which she died, was sold for the benefit of her creditors*."

" Is the circumstance common ?" said I.

" God forbid !" replied the train-bearer of mortality ; " for if every noble corpse, that died without paying his debts, were kept above-ground, the church-yards would soon be full of undertakers."

The roads were rendered so deep by the torrents of rain, that the cavalcade again halted to let the horses rest, and I made farther inquiries respecting Lord Linbourne. I found that his remains had been arrested at the suit of Lady Emily Delvin, for the sum of six hundred pounds ; that, after remaining

* True Anecdotes.

unburied nearly three weeks, the debt was discharged, and the body ordered for interment by an unknown friend. The latter circumstance surprised me more than the former. An act of persecution from a woman of Lady Emily Delvin's description was not sufficiently singular to excite astonishment; but that an unknown person should lay aside the claim to public praise, and voluntarily rescue the reputation of a departed friend from disgrace, was wonderful indeed! I did not then conceive, that the man who had evinced such noble, such generous sentiments, was no other than my ill-requited patron—Colonel Aubrey!

It is impossible to describe the reflections which followed this discovery.—Every proof which Colonel Aubrey gave of exalted philanthropy, served as an additional scorpion to sting my bosom with the anguish of compunction. The wretched highwayman, whom I had left that morning, appeared to my self-reproving mind, comparatively innocent, when imagination wandered back through the gloomy labyrinths of time, and pointed out the events which had rapidly followed my footsteps.

I quitted the sable group, and my mind was deeply impressed with the touching solemnity of its appearance.—I stopped at some distance, and looked back, for the last time, towards the vehicle which contained the breathless body of him, who, had I never breathed, might at that moment have been living. The idea was terrible! Yet the destruction of a dissipated mortal—of one whose life was employed in every species of tolerated fraud—who existed on the spoils of other men's credulity—and practised every vice with the unblushing effrontery of hardened infamy, was of less importance than the eternal wound which I had given to Colonel Aubrey's repose, by my rash and unprincipled conduct towards Miss Woodford. By the former, the world

was

was rid of an enemy to virtue; by the latter, society lost one of its brightest ornaments, and I the object who was not only entitled to my friendship, but to my unbounded gratitude.

As the sun began to light the summits of the distant hills, the horses moved slowly down a rugged steep, leading from the common. The sky brightened every instant, and the yellow tints of the morning beams, just visible above the horizon, caught the tops of the white plumes, as the hearse descended to the valley. I heard the sound of the wheels as they proceeded from me: the rumbling diminished as the distance augmented, till at length I was again left alone on the solitary waste, doubly impressed with melancholy by the scene which I had witnessed. I will leave you to fancy what I in reality experienced at that moment.

C H A P. XIV.

AFTER a few minutes, passed in reflections no less painful than unavailing, I spurred my horse with a kind of impetuous despair, and hastened towards Bath. On my arrival, I committed the landlord's nag to the care of a post-boy, with instructions to convey him back to his master by the first convenient opportunity; and immediately ordered a chaise to take me to Bristol.

The acute sensibility of my mind had seldom, in all its varying scenes of probationary suffering, experienced a more severe trial, than that of knowing myself the accessory to a murder. For, whatever the laws of honour, or the customs of society, may hold forth in extenuation of the act, the man who takes the life of a fellow-creature, except in the defence of life, is guilty of murder—tolerated, sanctioned, legal murder! I argue thus—If a man robs me of my purse, I have no right to destroy him,

while the laws are in full force to punish such an outrage. If I am cheated of reputation, there are also legal modes of bringing my calumniator to justice : neither have I any right to annihilate my enemy in one case more than in the other. The only excuse which human frailty can urge as a palliation of the crime, is that sudden and resistless irritability, which, rushing before our reason, seizes on all its faculties, and claims by violence instantaneous vengeance. In that case the maniac may offer some plea for the man : but the cool-blooded wretch who, calmly, thinkingly prepares the means of annihilating a fellow-creature—who waits with his intellects clear, his reason predominant over the violence of his passions, to destroy a being, who has, perhaps, in a moment of levity offended, is little better than an assassin ; and as such should be avoided by every friend to religion and society.

While the horses were harnessing, I strolled towards the North Parade ; and the first persons I met were the Duchess of Riversford with her daughters, accompanied by Lady Amaranth and the Duke of Heartwing. As I advanced to join them, they turned from me with an air of insolent contempt, which wounded my pride, and at the same time roused my indignation. At a loss how to notice such conduct without exposing myself to ridicule, for I did not know that people of rank had their days of acknowledgment and their days of total forgetfulness, I entered the Library, and, taking up one of the London newspapers, began to read. The arrogant group soon followed, and, as is the custom with high-bred females, endeavoured to look me into submission—watching my eyes till they encountered theirs, and then suddenly turning with a disdainful sneer towards some other object.

The Library was crowded with unlettered triflers ; and every new publication was demanded with an
avidity

avidity which human politeness had scarcely time to obey. Plays, pamphlets, novels, magazines, and reviews were handed round, and as quickly with their leaves unopened, returned to the librarian.

"I am grown to hate novels," cried the duchess; "the sentimental parts make one melancholy; and the intrigue, which is the only thing that enlivens them, presents nothing but what we all know. Were I to write a book of that kind, I would pourtray my hero from nature.—He should be a solemn pedant without an atom of knowledge, and a man of the world wholly educated in obscurity."

"How ridiculous!" cried Lady Arabella—"I am sure you cannot call that a portrait from nature."

"Exactly! absolutely from life!" replied the duchess, looking towards me. "My hero! methinks I see my hero!"

"But your portrait is full of contradictions," said Lady Amaranth.

"Therefore the female world will commend it through sympathy," added the duke.

"Well, I like my character of all things: I think it perfect," said the duchess.

"Your Grace is singular in your opinion," retorted Lady Amaranth.—"Now, were I to draw a sketch from nature, I would select some wild uncultivated boy, who should be a being of my own creating."

"Nobody questions your ladyship's strength of colouring," said the duchess; "and as far as experience goes, your chance of success is flattering. But the hero of a novel is not so easily delineated. I detest those mawkish, love-sick animals, who move with uninteresting rapidity through the slender pages of manufactured volumes, produced by the grinding brains of illiterate matrons, for the benefit of the rising generation.—Give me a Werter, or a St.

Preux, nay, even a Lovelace, or a Tom Jones; any thing but a Lord Wou'd-be-good or a Count Never-wrong. I read a work of this kind the other day, on my journey, merely to beguile time; it was fresh from a modern novel-mill, and strongly recommended by the reviewers; but judge of my surprise, when I discovered whole pages about tinder-boxes and potatoes!—the former without power to kindle a spark of animation—and the latter more unpalatable than moral admonition to a practised gamester.”

The young ladies began to giggle; Lady Amaranth blushed deep vermilion.

“Indeed,” added the duchess, “there was one excuse for the writer, for she avowed her own incapacity, in the preface to her work, and candidly declared that she had not the faintest hope of entertaining her friends. It would be well if all old women were equally honest.”

Lady Amaranth, in order to draw the attention of the circle from herself, and to fix it wholly on me, whispered—“Tis the same—don't you recollect him?”

Still I glanced over the columns of the newspaper, and endeavoured to arm my pride against the impertinence of folly. But human resolution is not permitted to oppose the omnipotence of fashion; and those whom its leading idols do not condescend to applaud, they seldom fail to persecute. The amiable junto, whose pleasure it was at that moment to torment me, taking their chairs near the door, began the attack; while I, unable to escape, for they had completely blocked up the passage, was condemned to seek for amusement in the literary repository.

Finding that their plan of humiliation seemed to lose its subduing qualities, they began to fear that looks would not accomplish their purpose; and the next auxiliary called in to aid them, was that doubtful, teasing, ambiguous, buzzing thing—a Whisper;

per; with all its accompaniments of shrugs, smiles, upraised eyes, sidelong glances, and oblique ejaculations calculated to excite curiosity and inflict mortification. I indistinctly heard them pronounce me a murderer, an impostor, a libertine, and a highwayman; yet, though urged on by insults, stigmatized by false reports, persecuted by overbearing arrogance, my pride, reputation, happiness, and forbearance attacked without mercy, and sacrificed without remorse, I had no remedy—because my assailants were persons of distinction!

The Duke of Heartwing, either ashamed of his associates, or fearful that their comments might produce unpleasant consequences, drew nearer and nearer towards the door; and without making the slightest signal of an adieu, in a few moments suddenly vanished. From that period the fair phalanx seemed to slacken in resolution. Their eyes were permitted to wander over the various objects which the library presented, and Lady Amaranth rising to borrow the last edition of "*Liberal Opinions*," a break was made in the circle, which was soon followed by a complete desertion. I now quitted my seat, and was advancing towards the interior of the library, in order to return the paper which I had borrowed, when I heard Lady Amaranth ask the librarian whether he knew me. "Take care," said she, "how far you hold any intercourse with him; for he is a very dangerous character."

"I have seen him with Colonel Aubrey, and think your ladyship must be mistaken," said the librarian.

"Not at all," replied Lady Amaranth, "he is suspected of having robbed Lady Emily Delvin. How he escaped punishment Heaven only knows."

"It cannot be the same," said a sensible-looking man, who stood near her ladyship; "and on mere surmise, it is barbarous to calumniate."

"Nobody

"Nobody knows him," said Lady Amaranth.

"He is the more entitled to protection from strangers," said the liberal observer.

"Who is this man?" inquired Lady Amaranth, in a loud whisper, at the same time fixing a vacant stare on my voluntary advocate.

"Mr. Melmoth," replied the librarian, "the author of many excellent and beautiful productions! a man equally distinguished for genius, and classical acquirements, as for the urbanity of his mind, and the excellent qualities of his heart!"

"I should like to read the productions of so extraordinary a character," cried Lady Amaranth. "I do not remember having met such a one in the circles of fashion."

"Most likely not," said Mr. Type, bowing respectfully.

"That modesty which is the associate of genius, obtrudes not itself on those who are incapable of appreciating its value," said I.

Mr. Melmoth drew back to an obscure part of the library. Lady Amaranth continued:—

"Give me one of his works; I shall want something to amuse me in the bath to-morrow morning."

"Your ladyship has already selected one; "Liberal Opinions."

"O! Gothic! out of date as much as much as though it had been printed before the flood! Who will pretend to recommend such antediluvian things as liberal opinions?"

"The Tutor of Truth."

"Worse!—a thousand times worse! I would not read such pages to be crowned with wreathes of myrtle. Has he written nothing more suited to the fashionable world?"

"Family Secrets."

"O Heaven! whose?—Any body's that I know? Delightful!—charming!—give me the first volume,
—I will

—I will not sleep till I have read it. Are any of my friends in it?—Full of anecdote I dare say.—What a clever creature!—I hope he does not mention me.—I never heard so exquisite a title.—You must present him to me. I never was acquainted with any author, except the Marchioness of Baramberg, and she is so vain of her talents, that there is no bearing her.”

“She has a right to be proud of that which nature has marked with such intrinsic value,” said I. “She is a rare example of exalted beauty, exhibiting the honours of illustrious birth, as her secondary claims to the meed of admiration: Her wit, vivacity, accomplishments, and liberal mind, would, in any country except England, render her an object of universal idolatry! and it is to be lamented that she should waste her days in the circles of ignorance and envy, while her rank, and, what I respect beyond all adventitious claims, her talents, would place her in that sphere, elsewhere, which would give celebrity to genius, and dignity to the most exalted situation.”

“Bravo!” cried Mr. Melmoth, whose breast never failed to beat with generous joy, when merit and talents were the subjects of panegyric. His energetic manner and voice pleased me;—and, in a moment, I fancied myself his old acquaintance. There was something like congeniality of opinion, which demanded my attention; and who could so eloquently impress the mind with esteem and admiration, as that being, who fastens on the heart by the resistless claims of “*sympathy*?”

C H A P. XV.

A PAUSE of some moments was interrupted by the return of the Duke of Heartwing. Lady Amaranth flew to meet him, and instantly taking his arm, led him towards the interior of the library, where she recommenced her buz of calumny with a new artillery

lery of inquisitive glances. I was preparing to depart, when the idea of flying like a despicable coward arrested my steps, and chained me to the scene of action.

The duke returned to the part of the shop where I still loitered, and with a tone of lordly impertinence cried, "Pray don't I know you?"

"That is more than I can answer," said I, carelessly. "Of one thing I can be certain at least, that I *know* your Grace."

"And what may you know of me?" inquired the duke, taking out his snuff-box, and advancing a few steps towards me.

"That which if you knew yourself, would no longer be your characteristic."

"Will you do me the honour to explain your words, for the edification of this charming circle?" said his Grace, with a supercilious sneer that irritated my feelings.

I am under too many obligations to the Duchefs, and Lady Amaranth, to deny them so small a favour," answered I.

"O! pray let us hear his Grace's characteristic," said Lady Arabella, "for I never knew that the Duke had strength of mind to evince any!"

"Sir, I desire your explanation," said his Grace of Heartwing, "for I never permit people who are not of my society to take liberties with my name."

"I dare say not," answered I, "if you can prevent them. But it is a busy prying world; and those who are placed on an eminence, should be cautious how they excite the curiosity of mankind."

"Who dares call my conduct in question?" demanded his Grace, growing red with anger.

"Few will take that trouble, my Lord," answered I, "though many will presume to observe it. The most profound philosophers have been known to watch and examine the labours of an insect."

"Now.

"Now for my characteristic," cried his Grace, in a menacing tone.

"Arrogance!"

"Puppy," murmured the Duke.

"Pride!" added I contemptuously.

"Insolent coxcomb!" faintly articulated the man of titles.

"Folly and insignificance!" said I calmly. "Now, my Lord Duke, are you satisfied?"

His Grace, turning towards the Duchess, muttered, "But that he is a vulgar dog, and beneath my resentment, I would crush him to atoms."

"The fly cannot crush the lion," said I, "though he may vex and sting him."

"Well! I protest there is something vastly comical in that remark!" cried Lady Arabella. "I love lions of all things. They are such powerful creatures, and at the same time so noble! I should like monstrously to have a young cub, to educate after my own fashion; only I should be afraid he would love me so well, that, some day or other, he would take it into his head to eat me, and that would be vastly shocking and wonderfully savage! would it not?"

"Our sweet poet, Spencer, represents the lion as incapable of offending beauty," said I.

"O!" exclaimed Lady Arabella, "I remember having the story painted on my fan. Una! the gentle, lovely Una! You have read then?"

The Duchess would have frowned her pretty epitome into silence. But, young as Lady Arabella was, she had already learnt to assert the privilege of her sex, and with infinite good-humour again addressed me:

"Well," said she, "after all, books are delicious things, though we are so apt to neglect them. I wonder whether there will be any books in another century. It would be monstrous comical if they should be totally exploded."

"Heaven

"Heaven forbid!" said I, "that man, so recently enlightened, should again degenerate into ignorance; and, by closing the avenues to reason, recommence the reign of tyranny and superstition."

"Well, I confess," cried Lady Arabella, "that I should like of all things to peep out of my grave, and see what my great-grand-children are doing; I dare say affairs will be monstrously changed: men will make caps and puff ribbands; and women forget their sex, to box and ride races."

"There would be little novelty in the former," interrupted the Duke, "for the men-milliners already furnish the abodes of gallantry with more fine women than ever embellished a Grand Signior's *seraglio*! We *connoisseurs* in the article of beauty have innumerable causes to commend the innovation; for were the young and the attractive employed in the old-fashioned occupations of their sex, we should be half ruined in the pursuit of elegant intrigue."

"You are monstrously scurrilous!" cried Lady Arabella; "and I cannot think how so savage a creature ever came to be so popular in the circles of refinement."

"Because he is an adept in deception," answered the Duchess. "Congeniality, in many instances, proves the strongest magnet of attraction."

"By Heavens!" exclaimed the Duke, "I speak nothing but mere matter of fact. Plebeian beauty has long overstocked the markets of intrigue, and is now become so plenty that it is of little value. But when a star shines forth in the higher sphere of fashion, every eye is fixed upon it, and every bosom beats to bask in its effulgence. But those who will soar, must pay dearly for their pinions. Ask my friend Lord Liberal whether his attentions to Lady Pennyles have not cost him a good twenty thousand! and did not a short excursion to the continent diminish the coffers of a noble dupe, to the tune of nearly that sum."

of.

"That, nobody will credit," said Lady Amaranth.

"Except his banker," interrupted Lady Arabella.

"If elegant beauty is so dearly purchased, how does your Grace arrange your affairs of gallantry?" said the Duchefs. "A liberal heart is not one of your most prominent characteristics."

"I import beauty as I do wine," answered his Grace; "it comes to me free of duty, from a country where it is no longer saleable."

Lady Arabella now took up a volume of "The Pupil of Pleasure."—"What a monstrous pretty title!" cried her ladyship; "I should like vastly to read this book; one may learn something worth knowing. Pray, Mr Ainsforth, what novel do you recommend? for, having a very high opinion of your taste, I should like to try something of your selecting."

"What kind of books does your ladyship like?" said I.

"O! all sorts," replied Lady Arabella; "but do not desire me to choose any thing tedious; for I never read, but when my *femme de chambre* is putting my hair in *papillots*, and that operation seldom lasts more than six minutes."

"Have you read Mrs. Phantom's last work? It has infinite merit."

"I read the first page, and did not like it," said Lady Arabella. "But have you nothing to recommend? reflect."

"Shall I offer you 'The Sorrows of the Heart;' you will find it well written, and interesting: its author is a man of enlightened taste and understanding."

"I don't like the title. I never read books that have not pretty names."

"My lady writes charmingly herself," said the librarian. "Her ladyship has lately produced some exquisitely beautiful lines, for Signor Florini; and it is quite the fashion to sing them in all polite circles."

Two stanzas were now handed round the library, and read by the Duke as specimens of the powers of finished education; and, as they are probably destined to grace a page in the voluminous productions of noble authors, I thought them worth the pains of transcribing;—thus :—

“ LINES, *addressed by a young Lady of Fashion to a small green Fly, which had pitched on the left ear of Lady Amaranth's little white Barbet, FIDELIO; on a summer evening, after a shower, near sunset.*

“ Little, barb'rous, cruel fly !
Tell me, tell me, tell me why
You to poor FIDELIO bring
To vex his ear, *so keen* a sting ?
Little, barb'rous, cruel fly,
Halt away, or you must DIE !

“ Soft !” I hear FIDELIO say,
“ Do not send the fly away :
“ Let him hover round and round,—
“ Let him, let him, let him *wound* ;
“ Lest the little rogue should sip
“ HONEY, from *my lady's lip* !”

This extraordinary effort of exalted genius was received by the noble auditors with enthusiastic wonder and applause, while every individual solicited to have a copy.

Lady Amaranth ordered the librarian to get one hundred immediately struck off on white satin, with painted emblematical margins, as presents for her friends. “ I do not mind what they will cost,” cried her ladyship, “ if they are but truly elegant, so as to render the decorations worthy of the poetry. Now let me choose the type. Have you any thing very curiously printed ? Mind that you put all the sublime passages in capital letters, and all the neat points in Italics. It will excite great curiosity in the fashionable world, and Lady Arabella's fame will make all
your

your living poets expire with envy. You must take care to get it handsomely reviewed. Consider, it is the production of no vulgar pen;—people of rank do not often embellish the literary sphere with such brilliant constellations.”

“ For once,” said the Duke, “ the doves of Venus will be crowned with the laurels of Apollo !”

Lady Arabella’s cheek glowed with conscious rapture !

“ Now let us choose the type,” interrupted Lady Amaranth.

A small collection of poems, written by a man of real genius, then in prison for debt, was handed to her ladyship.

“ This,” said the librarian, “ is a work of infinite merit. A second volume, now in the press, will be published by subscription; the sum only half-a-guinea.”

Lady Amaranth threw the book aside;—Mr. Melmoth took it up, and instantly whispered the librarian to shew him the list of subscribers. It was produced,—and we looked it over together. Mr. Melmoth set down his name for four sets, and I followed his example.

Lady Amaranth said, she never subscribed to any thing of the kind, except it was dedicated to herself; and the librarian replaced the list upon the shelf, with a sigh, and a glance at me, conveying the sentiment which he was too prudent to utter.

Lady Amaranth again repeated her charge that the poem of Lady Arabella’s writing should be superbly printed; the satin of the richest quality; and each copy bound in pink velvet, embroidered with the arms of her family. “ You will take care about the reviewing, in case the charming *morceau* should be pirated: remember, that it was written by a person of distinction, who has it in her power to repay a civil thing, and that handsomely. You understand me.”

The

The librarian bowed and smiled.

" I shall leave the direction of the whole business to you, Mr. Type," continued her ladyship, " for I shall set out towards London to-morrow. I have promised Lady Fubly and Mrs. Casino to assist them in finishing Mrs. Lyric's comedy."

" Does your ladyship write ?" said the librarian, with evident surprise.

Lady Amaranth laughed :— " O no ! Heaven forbid !" cried she ; " I have more elegant and more interesting occupations, believe me. What I call finishing a comedy is quite another kind of thing. We who govern in the higher spheres always finish those plays which attempt to ridicule our leading refinements. By finishing a piece, we mean putting an end to it. A few pounds distributed in the galleries, added to our own strong and invincible phalanx, will at any time set a theatre in an uproar."

" But if you banish scenic ridicule from the stage, will not the pen of the satirist meet you on other ground ? Does not the liberty of the press present a thousand avenues for just and natural retaliation ?" said I.

" Name one," said Lady Amaranth, rather piqued at the observation.

" The diurnal prints," answered I. " They are not so easily bought over to the service of unjust condemnation. Their conductors are, in general, men of liberal education. Some indeed are highly distinguished for literary abilities, and classical knowledge."

" The daily papers are too cheap," said the Duchess of Riversford ; " their price should be raised above the pockets of the vulgar. What right have the *canaille* to know the transactions of the upper world ?"

" That

"That right which is the scourge of overbearing licentiousness," answered I; which raises the bulwark of freedom above the chaos of folly and deception, and illumines the low hovel of honest industry, equally with the loftiest abode of pride and dissipation. Heaven forbid that the time should ever approach when that source of public information, which has so long been the pride of Englishmen, shall be closed and annihilated! when the country at large, from the palaces of princes to the meanest habitations of laborious honesty, shall be deprived of that luminary, whose power, while it expands the thinking faculties, protects those rights of which every honest mind should be tenacious."

Lady Amaranth made no reply: the Duchess fauntered towards the door: the Duke hummed an opera air; and Mr. Melmoth, by a nod of approbation, flattered my feelings more than a thousand bows from a thousand titled heads would have done. It was an honourable tribute from a man of worth and talents: as such, I knew and felt its value.

"Well!" sighed the Duchess, after a short pause of reflection, new and unpleasing to her Grace's mind, "I really think that some law should be made to rescue people of rank from the animadversions of impertinent scribblers. It cannot be of any consequence to the lower orders of people how we pass our time."

"Your Grace will pardon me for differing in opinion," said I; "but while the people suffer every inconvenience through the evil example set them in the higher spheres of life, the reasoning mind has a right to observe and to condemn it. While every virtue is exploded from the habitations of the exalted, vice acquires an ascendancy which undermines the morals of the community, and which must, in time, annihilate the bonds of civilized society. For, after all, the only sure foundation of those laws, which
cement

cement a people and form a kingdom, is moral rectitude: take from the mind a sense of shame, and you open to the passions every avenue which leads to the destruction of order, domestic peace, constitutional allegiance, and social amity."

"You are a profound reasoner," said his Grace; "but it is the province of the populace to rail at the exalted. The privilege which the laws allow to subjects is too extensive—it only makes the little insolent, and irritates the great to new acts of persecution. We always treat impertinent admonition with contempt."

"Very possibly," said I; "but the ear which is deaf to the soft murmur of a breeze, may be startled by the howling of a tempest. Nature will be heard; and the voice of truth may triumph over the apathy of folly, when its victory is the least expected."

"Thank Heaven that we are placed upon an eminence that sets every assailant at defiance," said the Duchess.

"There again the dull and arrogant mind misleads itself," answered I;—"there is no eminence which reprehension cannot reach—no shield which the shaft of ridicule cannot penetrate. The higher the objects of contempt are placed, the surer they become marks for the observing multitude; for

'Tis in their greatness their conviction lies.
Unseen the sweetest low-born buds decay;
But the proud cedar, tow'ring on the rock,
Stands like a landmark to attract men's eyes;
And tho' it shares the bright meridian blaze,
It cannot 'scape the pelting of the storm."

"That may be very fine, and very poetical," said Lady Amaranth; "but the personal consequence of nobility is not to be depreciated by the attacks of the vulgar."

"The

“ The vulgar are not the people who comment on the enormities of fashionable vice,” said I ; “ those who presume to observe and to condemn are as far from the lower orders of society as from the elevated circle of a court. The outrages committed by some whose rank renders them doubly conspicuous, are felt by all descriptions of persons ; for their pernicious example, spreading like a contagious disease, descends even to the lowest habitations, and contaminates those minds which have not reflection to resist it. The nobleman who keeps a public gaming-table, and the tame and sordid fool who tacitly winks at his wife’s depravity, are noxious weeds that poison the very source of civilized order, and make nature shudder at the innovations of licentiousness : can such a man be astonished if his lacquey robs him ? —or such a woman complain if her female epitome imitates the vices of her mistress, even at the expence of every domestic comfort ? I have indeed heard of even more horrible violations of those decencies which harmonize society ; instances where the nearest connections of propinquity have proved no bar to the indulgence of a criminal attachment. I have also been informed, that a *titled* libertine, who in his days of poverty was supported by a lovely, generous woman, after her bloom of youth was faded, and his vanity completely satiated, forgetting all the pure sensations of gratitude and honour, completed his plan of triumph and duplicity, by marrying her daughter ! But the career of infamy was of short duration—the unblushing profligate closed the scene of folly with his life ; and left not a bosom that bestowed a single sigh, nor an eye that dropped a tear to consecrate his ashes.”

“ Every man has a right to please himself,” said his Grace of Heartwing.

“ Such is the doctrine of overbearing pride,” said I ; “ but every man has not a right to destroy the happiness

happiness of another. And however the exalted offender may fancy himself secure beneath the robe of nobility, he is not concealed from the open and ever-watchful eyes of public observation. The voice of truth is expelled from the chambers of our rulers.—The man who dares be honest is deemed an enemy—a bold officious fool; while panders, knaves, and sycophants, men without honour, and women without shame, hang round their sinking victims till they engulf them. Let those who wish to bask in the smiles of public favour, who seek the distinctions of popularity, and the graced affections growing from the pure and feeling heart, associate with chosen friends—picked from the neglected tribes of enlightened and honourable men, who are too proud to flatter, and too honest to deceive. For, however greatness may exalt the brow, and keep the multitude at a distance, the most powerful of the human race, in these momentous times, are *men of letters*, not men of *titles*:—those who can guide the *pen*, and influence the country by the genuine language of truth and philanthropy; not the trifling, fawning, dissipated idiot who, like the noxious weed, twines round the most thriving tree, and while it seems to decorate its trunk, destroys it.”

“ I do not comprehend you,” said her Grace.

“ The idea is by no means hypothetical,” answered I; “ the convulsions of regenerated France are like the contending symptoms of vitality where the object has been benumbed by suspended circulation. The ears of princes in the atmosphere of Versailles were deaf to supplicating merit: their hearts were closed against suffering talents, by a petrifying torpidity, and their minds contaminated by false and vicious counsellors,—till nature shuddered at their injustice, and reason nerved her arm to scourge them. Every neglected man of genius became the enemy of despotism; every exalted son of illustrious intellect

intellect flew to the standard of tremendous retribution. The sinking phalanx then would have employed those energies to save them, which, before, they had despised—would have offered smiles and honours to secure their favour ! But the supplication came too late—for virtue was roused from the apathy of custom, and insulted reason triumphed over the ravages of infamy.”

“ You do not pretend to say that there are no distinctions in the human race ?” said Lady Amaranth.

“ Mental distinctions there certainly are,” answered I : “ but setting aside the innate qualities of the heart, the prince and the peasant more nearly resemble each other, than your ladyship will readily believe. Take the offspring of the noblest parent, and the hovel-born child of adversity—educate them with equal liberality—and the chance is even, that the one exhibits all the attributes of reason, all the graces of illustrious virtue, as proudly as the other. Yet the most enormous vices are not practised by the humble orders of the community, even with all the disadvantages of low birth and education.”

“ Well ! I protest I never heard such doctrine !” interrupted the Duchess.

“ Most likely not, Madam,” said I ; “ Your Grace’s beauty has made many idols ! but even the temple of divinity has been profaned by daring impostors, and its truths been violated for purposes of fraud : yet, trust me, time will shew that nature’s pure and simple doctrine touches the heart, while ostentatious folly sickens and disgusts it.”

“ It can be of no great consequence what the world thinks, or what men can write,” cried Lady Amaranth, yawning.

“ Pardon me,” said I, “ if I venture to affirm that, had not such men as Rousseau and Voltaire

existed, the earth had still been shackled by tyranny and superstition. Does your ladyship suppose that this little island is exempt from the rest of the habitable globe? and that, while philosophy beams far and wide on other nations, we alone shall vegetate in the glooms of ignorance? The embryo blossoms of genius cannot long lie dormant; and if any thing will quicken their expansion, it will be the shameless neglect which has too long condemned them to oblivion."

"Can the world complain that genius is not adored and cherished, while its admiration is directed towards this lovely example?" cried the Duke, addressing the young poets.

Lady Arabella wore her newly-woven laurels with becoming dignity; while his Grace of Heartwing, with a polite oath, pronounced her ladyship the most sublime and finished poet of the present century.

Again her wonderful production became the topic of conversation.

"How beautifully harmonious is the second line of the first stanza!" cried Lady Amaranth—"The repetition of words is so neatly, and at the same time so poetically arranged—nothing can be sweeter! Which is your Grace's favourite line?" addressing the Duchess.

"Why, I think the fourth line of the second part—it conveys such natural and interesting acquiescence."

"Her Grace speaks from sympathetic feeling, authorised by experience," cried the Duke. "Now, for my part, the idea which most pleases me is the honeyed lip! the very thought thrills through my heart, and melts it like new-fallen snow."

"I deny the similitude," interrupted her Grace—"new-fallen snow is both *cold* and *pure*."

"How

“How can my heart retain either of those qualities in your Grace’s service?” replied the Duke, with his accustomed gallantry and good nature. —“But which line does the fair poetess think the most beautiful?”

Lady Arabella looked earnestly at me, and with a bewitching smile, equally expressive of caution and vivacity, replied—“The last line of the first stanza.”

I comprehended her meaning —obeyed—and instantly departed:

C H A P. XVI.

ON my return to the inn, I found that the chaise had been waiting some time; and I immediately set out for Bristol.—The night was particularly dark, and my spirits, labouring under a painful depression, cherished such melancholy thoughts as seemed to deepen the gloomy hour of travelling. A thousand sad and desponding projects by turns took possession of my mind; and the long-meditated plan of self-annihilation seemed to predominate over every other. The caprice of fortune had wearied me into disgust, which rendered life scarcely worth preserving. I looked round the world—I beheld virtue and genius oppressed, and destined to encounter every humiliation, while vice and ignorance reared their unblushing heads, and smiled as they abjured all the sympathies of nature. When I compared the liberal, the amiable child of sorrow, with the herd of titled and exalted profligates—when I beheld the eye of genius dimmed with the tear of adversity—was it singular that I should turn from the scene with horror, and wish for repose—even in the oblivion of the grave?

Amidst all the varying conflicts of a perturbed imagination, I still loved Isabella. It seemed to be

my destiny that the enthusiastic fondness of my heart should augment, in proportion as she repaid my attachment with indifference or scorn. This may be folly ; it may be weakness bordering on idiotism ; it may be a mean and despicable want of pride and fortitude : I shall leave wiser heads and colder bosoms to decide the point, while I, from long and fatal experience—from nights of rumination and days of unceasing agony, pronounce it Nature. The human mind seldom relinquishes a pursuit wherein self-love is the predominating spring of action. All the vanity of the heart is roused to subdue that which presumes to resist its wishes ; and we are unwilling to relinquish a shadow of success, lest we betray our want of power, though the accomplishment of our enterprise promises little happiness to reward us for our labour.

Poor Amelia ! often did her destruction press upon my aching heart—and never without leaving a deepened wound to torture it. Her mild and soothing virtues—her sympathizing bosom, ready to participate in every pang which fortune could inflict—her noble, her disinterested friendship, at a moment when the world forsook me, and the horrors of poverty and sickness added new force to the fever of despair, crowded on my exhausted mind, and robbed it of every hope which reason might have cherished. She had sacrificed all that was dear to propriety for my sake—she had relinquished the smiles of fortune, the protection of her family, the admiration of the virtuous, and the prospect of repose. How did I requite her kindness ?—I abandoned her like a cold-bosomed determined libertine ; rejected her generous and feeling heart, and left it to feed the scorpion of compunction, while I pursued a phantom that was perpetually flying from me.

Reflec-

Reflection told me that Miss Woodford was, in personal attractions, equal to Isabella—for mental charms no less distinguished—in affections more attaching to any reasonable mind—in all the graces of truth, unvarnished sensibility, heroic friendship, infinitely superior. Then wherefore did I shrink from the one, and blindly persevere in idolizing the other? Because I was the dupe of my own passions, an alien from reason, the slave of early impressions, and the pupil of resistless nature.

I set out on my journey through life with a bosom aching under the pressure of unkindness. As my mind expanded, I progressively learnt to discriminate betwixt the homage which venal minds pay to powerful unworthiness, and the cold applause which merit meets with in the busy varying paths of human trial. I found that the natural passions implanted in the breast of man were too often terribly triumphant over the sober dictates of reason and reflection, and that the gratification of those passions would inevitably involve their victim in ruin and disgrace; yet I had not strength of mind to vanquish the strong hand of Nature, which, in spite of every opposing power, propelled me on to errors:—let me not soften the appellation, let not the sophistry of self-extenuation lay the “flattering unction” to my soul, but suffer me, O mild and sympathizing monitress! to call them crimes. Yes, I am a criminal—an involuntary criminal. But I begin to find the iron shield of defiance growing over my breast; I begin to hate my oppressors. Persecuted by my fellow man, can I be less than a misanthropist?—The overbearing insolence of pride dissolves the social bonds of life, and engenders all the ills that deform the human mind, while every avenue to the heart is by degrees closed against affection, pity, and compunction. Can a creature whom the world incessantly persecutes, who is the

very make game of fortune, whose bosom, tempest-beaten by adversity and wrung by sorrow, experiences neither the compassion nor the kindness of his species—can he be expected to love those beings who destroy his hopes, and cast him, like a ship-wrecked sufferer on a stormy shore, to wither his youth in sadness, or in despair to perish?—Impossible. It is man alone that forms the misanthrope; he arms himself against his brother man, and then wonders at the courage that resists him. Had I found either friendship, virtue, or humanity in my intercourse with the exalted, I might, like a feather, have been borne along by every breath, and at last have glided, pleased, down the stream of folly to oblivion. But those who are greatly injured, have a right to be strongly indignant. If knaves and villains are to pass through the dark variety of successive crimes—to ingulph others, and to escape themselves—where is the justice of mankind? and what are the bonds that harmonize society?

I had frequently meditated suicide, and, with all its horrors, all its criminality, I could not divest myself of that longing after death, which could alone terminate a life of unmitigable sorrow; for to whatever point my weary eyes were directed, the prospect teemed with misery. My spirit, by nature restless, perpetually wandered back to scenes of persecution, and time presented no oblivion to the retrospect, but the darkness of a sepulchre. Could I restore Colonel Aubrey's peace of mind—Amelia's reputation—Lord Linbourne's life?—Impossible. Then where was I to hope for happiness?—in age and apathy? Could I look forward to enjoyments, when the finer powers of sensation became extinct? Would not my disastrous fortune urge me on to an accumulation of crimes? and was it not virtue to shake off a being, which would either become a curse to society, or a terrible example

ple of offended justice?—I had once cherished with horrible delight, the hope of destroying Sir Sidney Aubrey; I had, in fancy violated Isabella's honour.—Amelia was the victim;—she lived to breathe forth the perpetual sigh of torturing reproach, and I was still defeated in the gratification which revenge had meditated on my rival. These were my hourly ruminations. Ah, Rosanna! such is the exile whom you honour with your friendship. Such are the confessions of a being, whose infant mind was contaminated by prejudice, and who, taught to hate mankind before he was capable of discriminating the difference betwixt the graces of virtue and the deformities of vice, considered the vicissitudes of fate as individual persecutions, which human feeling was bound to oppose, and resisting strength to punish. The basis of philosophy is an universal love of our species; the mischiefs of jealousy, resentment, pride, revenge, and hatred set its precepts at defiance, while they nourish all the miseries of life, and render the thinking creature, man, scarcely one degree less savage than the tiger which he shrinks from.

It was near midnight when I arrived at Bristol. I stopped the chaise at Mr. Randolph's door, and knocked with an impetuosity which clearly demonstrated the impatience of my mind: but how shall I describe my chagrin when the servant informed me that Mr. Randolph had, early in the morning of the same day, set out for Glenowen? I had taken a solemn oath never to visit my native mountains during the lifetime of Lady Aubrey, and my disappointment was unutterable. There was nothing to be done but to return to Bath; and, as soon as fresh horses could be procured, I set out to re-measure my tedious journey. The irritation of my mind was in no degree abated by this new source of vexation: I added the perplexing event to the long

catalogue of my misfortunes, and the only idea which rendered them supportable was that of their speedy termination.

As soon as I entered the inn at Bath, I hastened to my apartment, where I wrote the following

S O N N E T.

O busy WORLD ! since ev'ry passing day
Unfolds new scenes of agonizing woe ;
Say, whither shall the child of mis'ry go ?
Where seek, mid thorns, one flow'r to deck his way ?
My stormy hour presents no cheering ray ;
For me, no summer morn shall proudly glow :
Round my chill'd heart the winds of winter blow,
While fainting Hope but lingers to decay.

Oh, barb'rous World ! why from my bleeding breast
Bid peace, with all the pure affections, fly ?
While round my couch, Despair, in horrors drest,
From my torn heart extorts th' eternal sigh.
Bid me, oh ! bid thy trembling victim rest,
For since 'tis *hell* to live—'tis HEAV'N to die !

By the time I finished the effusion of despair, the morning was far advanced, and the house was perfectly still. I threw myself on my bed, and passed an hour in meditation ; the result of which was terrible to remember. I felt assured that existence had no joys in store for me, and I resolved to perish. My pistols were loaded ; my mind disordered by the frenzy of despair. I rose, and advanced towards them :—I stopped ;—the blood seemed to recoil from my heart. I ventured another step ;—the abbey clock struck four, and again all was silent. Thou solemn tongue of Time ! thought I, when next thy deep vibrations steal from their antique towers, I shall be at rest !—this feverish brain will for ever cease to ache ! this heart, this proudly throbbing heart, will freeze to the very centre !

I was now within a step of the table. I shuddered not while I fixed my eyes on the instruments of death :

death : I stretched forth my hand ; it did not tremble. " The deed," said I, " is repugnant to nature—but I am an outcast ; for me the world has neither comfort nor affection. I have been buffeted by the storms of fortune, wounded by the arrogant, neglected by the proud ; the object dearest to my heart has inflicted on that heart—a wound, which time can never cure. Then wherefore should I live ?"

I was roused from my reverie of sadness by a rustling sound in the adjoining room. I hesitated, and listened ; but hearing nothing move, again returned to the table. Presently a bell was rung, and a lamp called for. As it entered the apartment, I perceived a small window over the door of my chamber, while a faint voice demanded, " Who sleeps in the next apartment ?"

" A strange gentleman," replied the female servant of the house. " I don't know his name, but in the morning I'll ax."

" It is of little importance," said the feeble inquirer, with a faint and tremulous tone. " I only believe that the person is mad, by his strange and incoherent language ; indeed I thought I knew his voice. Do you not remember to have heard his name ?"

" Naw, my lady. But he's a lord—that I be zure on."

" Then I was mistaken," said the lady ; " but that he is out of his senses is most certain : I have not been able to close my eyes since he entered his chamber."

" Zure !" exclaimed the chamber-maid ; " you don't tell me zo. Why you must know, that when I lit him to his room, I thought a zeem'd to look mighty creazed. His eyes be as wild as our tabby cat's, and his cheek as pale as the very sheets. I think a is bezide himzself, zure enough. Poor

zaul ! I've a great mind to bide at his door all night ; for a zeems quite a quality parson, and I a-bin told, that your quality be terrible apt to make away we themselves. Dear lack ! I shou'd never be able to bide in the house for fear of his haunting it. I wish I cou'd do any thing to keep him from zuch dismal ways ; for he is too comely a gentleman to be let die, if one knaw'd how to save'n."

" You increase my alarm !" said the lady ; " your description convinces me that he is a maniac."

" O Lord-a-mighty !—a what ?—I never zeed zuch a thing in all my born days !" cried the girl. " I took'n for a gentleman, and a look'd for all the world just like one. Shall I call up measter ?"

" I dare say he is a gentleman," said the fair invalid, faintly ; " but he may, nevertheless, be a maniac."

" Zure !" exclaimed the girl ; " who wou'd-a-thought it ? What's to be done ?—Do-'e think that I could do any thing to quiet'n ? I shall be very willing, God knows !—No quality parson that ever tarried at our house can zay that I refused to do whatever they axed me."

" I dare say you are very obliging," cried the lady.

" Ees, zure ; I be always agreeable and complying."

" Then examine whether the door is fast, leave your light upon the hearth, and I will endeavour to sleep," said the invalid.

" Ben't-e a-fear'd to bide alone ? cried the girl ; " and zo near the what-d'ye-call-um gentleman ?—You can't think how terrible scared a look'd !—the wicked-one is often busy with quality fokes, and who do knaw but a-may break in, and beheave ungentleelly or zo !—I should be mazed, and that's
the

the truth on't, if 'twere I—but you know best what pleases you, and I be always agreeable."

I placed a chair near the door of communication, and raising myself upon it, endeavoured to get a view of the lady, whose voice awakened my curiosity. "Hush! do'e but harken!" said chambermaid. "As zure as I be living, he's agwain to hang himself. Lord-a-massey upon us! what a rum-pus there will be in the house, if such a pretty gentleman should make away with himself. Then a-wou'd be buried in the cross roads, with a stake driven through un."

The idea made me shudder with horror.

"And then he'd be only made game on for his pains; for the world never pities fokes that are beside themselves."

That's true, thought I. She continued—

"Perhaps he be in love?—poor zaul!—Well, if his sweetheart proves false, a may perhaps find another that will make him amends for it. You can't think what a comely gentleman a-his—a little sun-burnt or zo; but his eyes be as black as a floe, and he is as tall and as straight as a may-pole: and yet for all that, I war'nt he'd be forgot just as soon as an ugly body. Nobody would care a pin about him, because a was so foolish as to kill himself for love; a thing that every body laughs at now-a-days. Then what wou'd a-get by it? why, he'd go to the wicked-one, and there'd be an end o' it!—'I would be time enough to go to the next world when a gets old and ugly: don't you think zo, ma'am?—I'm zure I do."

The lady by her glance had fallen into a flamber—the girl continued—I listened.

"Besides, ma'am, it would be zo pigeon hearted, and zo wicked at the seame time: and then the place where a would be buried, like a dog as one may say, would be troubled with his ghost, as zure as I be living; and 'twou'd be taken on ine
cut

out a mind, and naw-body would go by the road after dark, it would be zo unkid; for country-vokes be sometimes terrible frightful. There's naw-body more timerfome than I; and I should be sorry to be frightful for zuch a comely looking gentleman — that's the truth on't. Dear me, if I cou'dn't cry my eyes out, only but to think what wou'd become of'n, if a was to take to desput ways."

The lady still remaining silent, her attendant, who was young and handsome, advancing towards a table on which stood a dressing-glass, and viewing her countenance with evident admiration, resumed her comments, while she gratified her vanity.

"Then ma'am you know," said she still looking at herself, "vokes will think that a-has done zomething terrible wicked, and was glad to rid himself of life for fear of the justices, and if he has got any kinsfolk or acquaintances, why they'd be ashamed to own that a belong'd to um. So a wou'd go to the bad place, and lose his character, and all for nothing; while the whole world with, his false-hearted sweetheart into the bargain, wou'd laugh and snicker at'n for a great foolish ninny-hammer."

This was Nature's reasoning, and on me its impression was certain. Every word sunk deep into my heart; all the lore of wisdom, all the sophistry of schools, could not have poured persuasion into my mind like that which fell from the tongue of this simple moralist. Yes, thought I, I should be stigmatized as a fool, a coward, a despicable criminal. The world would laugh at me — my friends, if I have any, would condemn me — Isabella would triumph — and, as soon as my mangled remains were marked with ignominious violence, my name would either be forgotten, or my crime remembered with abhorrence; all that this artless girl had prophesied would, in the space of a few
short

short weeks, be realized. The voice of reason speaks through the soul-enchaining organs of resistless truth ; a child of Nature evinces that the polish of education, like the touch of the lapidary, by giving too fine a lustre, sometimes destroys the gem it seeks to embellish : for we have known many examples, where deep and laborious mental toil has enervated the reasoning faculties. by overcharging the labyrinths of thought ; while a moderate share of learning has called forth that flame which animated the bosom of a Shakespeare ! and roused to daring intrepidity, the lofty spirit of a Cromwell.

C H A P. XVII.

THE pretty chambermaid continued near the dressing-table ; and I had, from the situation in which I placed myself, a perfect and distinct view of her features as they were reflected in the glass before her : they were exquisitely beautiful. A box of *rouge* stood near her hand. After looking several times towards the bed, to observe that the curtains were quite closed, she with trembling caution deepened the fine tint of her cheek, while she contemplated the fancied improvement with evident approbation. A lady's riding-hat, adorned with white feathers, was the next object of trial ; and a deep-drawn sigh seemed to declare her longing for those ornaments, which would not have lent an additional charm to the loveliness of nature.

After passing several minutes in silent contemplation, during which her countenance assumed a variety of expression not easily described, she stole towards the bed and listened. On her return to the table every thing that lay scattered about was curiously examined, not without frequent glances

glances at the object which the mirror still presented. A train of reflections stole across my mind. Poor, pretty, painted fly! thou art like the insect which hovers round the flame that kills it, thought I. Thou longest at this moment to revel in the full splendor of those vanities, which would inevitably destroy thee. Thou hast no rank, no exalted shield to protect thee from the taunting world; no privilege to violate the decencies of life; no gold to purchase praise; to silence truth; or to hire assassins, who may crush thy enemies. Thy pure unpractised heart would shrink at persecution; and thou would'st, being poor and unprotected, perish beneath the insults of un pitying enemies.

While I was absorbed in these reflections, the lady, who was concealed from my view by the closely drawn curtains, sighed deeply. Her pretty but inquisitive attendant stole softly towards the door, and after sliding the hat upon a chair, was making her escape, when my unlucky physiognomy met her eye. Before I had time to descend, she hastened to the other side of the bed, and shrieked most vehemently: the lady joined in the terrifying sounds, and in a few minutes the whole house was awakened.

"A ghost! a ghost!" exclaimed the affrighted girl. "The ghost of the what-d'ye call-um gentleman! I saw it we my awn eyes. A looked at I as bitter as thof a wou'd kill a body! Nobody knaws the reason but I. Dont-'e ax me! dont-'e ax me!" Again she shrieked, while several persons, who had rushed into the room defined, her to explain her meaning.

"Oh! I zed a-wou'd walk, I zed a wou'd trouble the house!" cried she. "A was as white as church wall, and as tall as the steeple!—never zore zince I comed from Devonshire did zuch a mortal fright appear before I. I shall never rest in my

my bed, that's zure ! for I had'nt the heart to ax'n what a wou'd ha with I ; and I know that the ghost had zummut to zay, or a-wou'dn't a walk'd, that's for fartin. Dont-e awp'n the door !—dont-e, if ye bean't ont of your wits: Who knows what a may do if one angers him !”

“ Whom, and what do you mean ?” cried a strange voice. “ Dish my jasey, you're quizzing us. Stop your gab and tell us what's the fun now ?”

“ O ! 'tis naw fun, your honour my Lord,” replied the chambermaid ; “ 'tis all as true as the Gospel : if I be alive I zaw his ghost ! The lady can tell-e what a-was she calld'n by a strange out-of-the-way neam. I can't bring it to mind : but, as zure as I was born, I zeed'n with my awn eyes.”

“ So I suppose, if you saw him at all,” interrupted the interrogator ; “ but leave shamming, and talk so that one may understand you. I do not believe in ghosts.”

“ O ! dont-e zay zo,—dont-e, if you ha'n't a mind to bring un back again. God A-mighty vorgi' me, for I did provoke'n, that's the truth on't. If a had a mind to hang himself, what was that to I ? I had naw business to be meddling and meaking with other vokes troubles, not I. I tould the lady that a-was mazed when a-comed to our innu ; and she was of the zame way o'thinking. The Lord-a massy on his poor zaul ! for as zure as I be living, the wicked one has got'n.”

On hearing me try the door of communication, she again began to thrick.

“ Why, dath my wig, you scream like a peacock ! You have dinned the drum of my ears, till I cannot hear my own voice,” said the stranger.—The girl continued :—

“ Awver the door ! awver the door ! we two eyes like the lantern of the male coach ; and a mouth for all the world like the geats of our abbey !
There

There did I zee un, or I bean't alive. Well, God A-mighty forgive I! I had naw business to backbite the poor zaul, that's zure enough! thof I know'd that a-wou'd make away we a-self the moment I zet eyes on un: a-look'd as 'twere betwattled."

Quiz me, but you're a queer one!" said the stranger; "where did you learn your gab? why you may as well explain the business in Greek or Hebrew, as in the twaddling language you adopt. Why you have been knawing and zawing this half hour, and not got through your story after all."

Finding that the curiosity which this simple girl would excite could not fail to procure me a visit from her hearers, I passed by another door which communicated with the staircase, and presently joined the group. On entering the room, I perceived the chambermaid sitting on the ground, surrounded by several persons collected from all parts of the inn, and a more grotesque assemblage never inspired the pencil of a caricaturist. At the sight of me, her shrieks grew louder than ever, till she fell into a fit of hysterics, and became wholly ungovernable; while to my infinite astonishment I found that the person whose voice had last addressed her was the young nobleman whom I had met in the watch-house, on the first night of my arrival in London. The situation in which I had then seen him totally precluded the possibility of his recollecting me, though his features were instantly recognized on my entering the apartment.

As soon as the first impression of astonishment subsided, and the terrified girl began to recover her senses, I felt an unaccountable longing to peep at the lady within the curtains. There was something in her voice, though low, feeble, and scarcely articulate, that awakened more than common curiosity. Doubtful whether or not she was connected

ned with any of the persons then present, I waited to hear what they would say when the girl became reconciled to my appearance. The whole group was preparing to depart, without making the slightest enquiry after the fair invalid, whose silence convinced me that she wished to remain unnoticed. There is some mystery thought I in this taciturnity, and therefore I will be prudent. Still the busy genius which never suffered my imagination to repose, prompted me to discover who it could be, and what occasioned such extraordinary caution. The trembling chambermaid was led towards her apartment; the group followed; and I was left alone with the silent incognita.

However singular it may seem, the moment I had the power to gratify my curiosity, the inclination subsided. There appeared to be something so indelicately obtrusive in the attempt, that I had not resolution to draw back the curtains. That she was alive, there could not be a shadow of doubt; her shrieks were proofs incontestable. That she was silent did not astonish me, because in such a situation, the only way to escape discovery was to avoid every thing that might excite attention. I walked about the room, in hopes that she would speak; but not a syllable did she utter. I advanced towards the bed; again receded; a second time approached a few steps, and recoiled with equal self-reproof. I now ventured to speak, and to express a hope that the silly girl had not alarmed her. Not a word repaid my attentions, and I began to fear that she was dead, when a long-laboured sigh relieved me from the horrors of apprehension.

I paused several minutes, undecided how to act: my longing to obtain a sight of the unknown invalid was scarcely to be conquered: yet I knew not how to satisfy my inclination, without the risk of again alarming her; and the certainty that my
conduct

conduct would be deemed a violation of decorum, insulting to the delicacy of her sex, made me recoil whenever I approached her. I therefore resolved to return to my chamber, and to wait till her hour of rising, when I might with propriety inquire after her health. I examined the door of communication; it had no fastening on my side; she therefore had the power to prevent my re-entering her apartment; but I had still the panes of glass over it, from whence I could see, and convince myself whether I knew her, in case she might refuse me admittance into her presence.

Day-light began to enter through my curtains; and as I bent my eyes on the pistols which lay before me, my heart thudded, and my whole frame was chilled with a tremor which cannot be described. The interval of reason had subdued the impatience of despair; and I scarcely dared approach that spot on which, only two hours before, I had meditated self-destruction. The momentary frenzy, diverted from its course by a combination of trivial events, had passed away like a summer storm; and the unclouded intellect which succeeded, made me blush at the impetuosity of my passions. So rapid are the transitions of irritable minds; so minute is sometimes the event which determines the fate of mortals, that even on the verge of eternity when the crisis makes the soul tremble in the conflict, one glimmering ray of reason can destroy the gloomy shadows of despair, and check the hand that is raised to annihilate!

While I stood transfixed and chilled with horror, a murmuring groan awakened my attention. I listened; it was repeated. Human resolution could no longer resist the impulse of curiosity, and, on tip toe, I returned to the adjoining chamber.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVIII.

I GENTLY drew back the curtain, and, with a degree of consternation which no language can describe, beheld Amelia Woodford pale and entirely senseless! her eyes were closed; her cheek had lost that beautiful and healthful roundness which exhibited the freshness of youth, when a few weeks back I had beheld her the pride of her family, and the admiration of the fashionable world. She appeared at least ten years older, and so unlike her former self, that had not every feature been indelibly impressed upon my mind, I should not have known her. I touched her arm which lay across her bosom; it was as cold as marble; her lips were colourless; she scarcely breathed, and my distress was terrible. I was at a loss to decide in my own mind, whether she was only in a state of suspended sensation, owing to the fright she had experienced, or absolutely expiring. In either case, I deemed myself accessory to her peril, and throwing myself on my knees near her pillow, gave way to the most distracted self-reproaches.

"Poor, gentle victim of a too generous sensibility!" said I; "am I, at last, destined to close thy eyes in death, and to witness that scene of horror which will consign me to perpetual anguish?" I kissed her pale and icy cheek;—I pressed her lifeless hand to my aching, feverish bosom. "Too surely it was the magnet of unerring destiny which drew me hither," said I, "to receive an awful and decisive punishment for all the agonies which thy gentle heart has suffered!" I rose hastily; I raised her on my trembling arm; her whole frame was powerless. I addressed her in the kindest and most soothing language; but she heard me not. Expecting every moment that she
would

would breathe her last sigh upon my ungrateful bosom, I raved like a wretch deprived of reason, and cursed my fate in the very bitterness of sorrow.

The sound of my voice brought the chambermaid once more to the scene of distress. As soon as she entered the room, I demanded when Miss Woodford arrived; and whether she was alone.

"She comed late last night," said the girl; "and a young gentleman comed we her."

"A young gentleman—!"

"Aye zure. He that you zeed here but just now," replied the girl. "He is a lord, and a-zeemed mighty fond of the poor young lady, that's the truth on't; and a-zaid that was a-going to Brister bytimes in the morning; zo if you do want to zee my lord, you be lucky to have catched'n. I shall go and call the lady's gentleman? A-do only sleep in next chamber—an I warr'nt he'll come, if I do fetch on, thof I be a little afeard of'n too."

"Do you know his name?" said I hastily, still supporting Amelia, and watching her death-like features.

"No but I can ax his walley,—the foreigner gentleman;—I don't fear he."

"Fly quickly," said I, "and mind that you make no mistake;—every moment is precious, —every moment full of danger."

"Zure! Well, I'll not tarry; but take care you don't let the poor lady die while I be wanting."

Away flew the girl, and again I conjured Amelia, if she had the smallest degree of sensation, to answer and relieve me.—"Dear and gentle friend," said I, "speak to the unhappy Walsingham."—A convulsive spasm shook her frame almost to annihilation; for the moment of returning sense was rendered terrible, by the sound of
that

that voice, which she could not but remember with agony.

The simple chambermaid justly believed that no person was so capable of giving her the name of the young nobleman as he who bore it: she therefore thought, that the shortest way of settling the matter was to make him a visit, without farther hesitation; and in a few minutes he entered the chamber. As he approached the bed, Amelia endeavoured to speak; but the feeble state of her nerves, and the universal lassitude which possessed her frame, prevented the power of utterance.

"D—me, this is a good go!" exclaimed the young lord. "Who the Devil are *you*, Sir? and what business have you in this lady's chamber? Come, kennel my keen sportsman—there's no bird for you in this covey;—tip us the go-by—or I shall be apt to shew you the way—dash my jasey."

I made no answer, but still gazed on Amelia with a mixture of pity and compunction. She frequently raised her languid and feverish eyes towards me; she sighed deeply, and often: a tear rolled down her wan cheek,—and my heart was bursting with conscious agonies. All the pangs of remorse, all the tortures of self-reproof, conspired to drive me frantic:—I snatched Miss Woodford's hand;—I kissed it. A feeble pressure convinced me that she was not insensible to my sorrow. She endeavoured to speak, to smile,—but the effort was subdued by the interposition of Heaven, and the benign angel was not permitted to bestow on my afflictions the most transient gleam of consolation.

The young nobleman stood like one that was petrified with astonishment.—He looked by turns earnestly at me and at Miss Woodford—At length with a tone half serious and half jocular, he addressed me——

"Hark

"Hark ye, my hearty, this won't do, by all that's quizzical. This lady is under my protection, and you must not think to offend her. So you had better be moving, my honest fellow; take yourself off—go it—budge—the road lies before you—straight as your nose.—I don't want to quarrel with you—I hate a row—but you must not remain another second in this chamber—unless you have a mind to sport your barking-irons, and finish the thing handsomely."

"If you have a right to claim Miss Woodford's confidence," said I—"if she gives you authority to command my absence, I shall depart. But if she will allow me to protect her, your menaces will be of little importance."

Miss Woodford waved her hand, as if to check the altercation.

"You see, my Lord," said I, that this is no place for investigating who has and who has not a right here. In the cause of humanity every man is authorised to follow the dictates of his heart; and I should not deserve to be ranked with my fellow-creatures, were I capable of deserting such a woman, and in such a situation. I—I am the cause of all that Miss Woodford suffers—it is to me that she is indebted for these conflicts of mind, which menace even her existence. But I will snatch her from the arms of death—she shall not perish—I will not be her murderer! Look up, Amelia—be comforted—command the wretch who does not deserve thy pity; and let one honourable action in some degree, prove an extenuation of the folly, the frenzy of his conduct."

"Oh, Walsingham!" sighed Miss Woodford, as she hid her face upon her pillow.

"Walsingham!" interrupted the young lord, with evident surprise, "quell my caxon! are you Walsingham Ainsforth! Here's a kick-up! Why,

old Aubrey is waiting at Bristol to marry little Milly. You played truant, my fly one; and women are not to be cajoled without some shew of spirit, my hearty. I advised her to carry the colonel's knapsack—and she's going to head-quarters under my escort. So strike your colours, and beat up for recruits in some other district—little Milly is no match for you, I promise you."

The spirit of contradiction began to acquire its usual ascendancy over my mind, and the young champion's language only served to augment its powers of resistance. I could not bear his taunting manner; I could not endure the mortification of a refusal from the juvenile protector of Miss Woodford. After a short pause, I replied, with a tone of marked indignation—"Your commands and Colonel Aubrey's claims are very distinct indeed; and I shall as firmly resist the one as I shall as firmly resist the other sacred. If Amelia can be happy with my friend—the most worthy and honourable of men! Heaven can bear witness how sincerely I shall exult in her felicity. But if her determination is averse to such an union, my hand, my life shall be dedicated to the promotion of her peace—to the establishment of her future tranquillity."

Miss Woodford, raising herself on her arm, feebly articulated "Never!"

"You see that I was right, my hearty," cried the young lord. "You may hand yourself off as soon as convenient.—So let us adjourn and drink a bottle of champaign to your speedy conveyance. You seem to be a merry fellow, notwithstanding your wry faces—and nothing settles love like a cheerful glass and a clear conscience."

science. Dash me, what signifies repentance ?—the thing is done—Milly is going to patch up the business with the help of a parson ; and Aubrey is a d—d fine fellow, and—so there ends the whole matter handsomely. Besides my little cousin wants rest ; she has been piping all the way down to Bath—and devilish ill into the bargain. Let her alone—she'll come about, and all will be right, if you will but be quiet."

I soon found by the conversation of the young nobleman that he was no other than Lord Kencarth ; the person to whom I had not long before, offered my services as a travelling tutor. With some persuasions on his part, and many expressive glances from Miss Woodford, I consented to quit the room ; we ordered breakfast, for it was near seven o'clock, and in a few minutes retired to another apartment.

Lord Kencarth, notwithstanding his uncouth language, and affectedly knowing manners, possessed a generous brave and feeling heart. He had been his mother's darling from his infancy ; and her nature was so affectionately gentle, that the labour of her life was uniformly that of gratifying every wish which her son could entertain or express. His education had been wholly neglected—his will in every respect unconstrained. He had associated with grooms, been flattered by dependants, and, by stepping from the nursery to the stable, was as uncultivated in mind and manners as though he had been born on a desert, and reared to manhood in the society of savages : yet, his bosom was warmed by those liberal affections, which are sometimes aliens to the most polished and exalted individuals ; while his heart never failed to sympathize, or his hand to succour the unhappy. If the
virtues

virtues are the associates of a wild unfashioned nature, let the polished and the proud blush while they contemplate their own deformity !

C H A P. XIX.

DURING breakfast we conversed on Miss Woodford's situation : I found that, soon after her return to the house of her mother, she became delirious ; and, by the advice of Doctor Pimpernel, was removed to a private mad-house, of which he was the principal proprietor.

The doctor had travelled much, and had tried all professions, in all climates. The conclusions which he drew from experimental knowledge were these—That two-thirds of the breathing race were mad ; and that he who could get possession of a patient's mind, was more than half assured of dominion, whether in a state of convalescence or of confirmed insanity. For this reason he set up a mind-mill, where he ground the shattered particles of intellect, to his own purpose ; and when the produce of his labour promised either reputation or profit, he never failed to promote the one, or to embrace the other. A husband who wanted to have a troublesome wife *taken care of*—a libertine who wished to *provide for* a mistress, when the edge of passion became blunted by satiety—or a man of refined taste, who sought to *secure* unguarded innocence, found infinite advantages in the subduing atmosphere of the all-potent mind-mill.

To this scene of variegated misery Miss Woodford was conveyed, bathed with her mother's tears, and unconscious of her dreary destination ; the doctor promised to attend her daily, absolutely forbidding all intercourse with her family or connections.

Mrs. Woodford's confidence in Doctor Pimpernel's *professional skill* was boundless; she did not recollect that he was also *skilled* in *professions*; and that sincerity was not one of the qualities which characterised his mind, in his intercourse with society. That friend whom he "grappled to his heart with hooks of steel" one day—the next he would "cast like a loathsome weed away." With the little he was the greatest of men; with the great he shrunk into the least! He talked higher and bowed lower than any courtly hater of courts within the atmosphere of political warfare. Like the vanes of a steeple, he soared above every other object, and was perpetually turning to all points without fixing to any. Born in one country, educated in another, a traveller in a third, and a citizen of a fourth, he had acquired a smattering of every language—a *gusto* for every folly, a degree of notoriety in all, but a portion of reputation in none. He had written books that nobody read, and related wonders which nobody credited. His mind was a sort of *falmagundi* of Hibernian assurance, Scottish erudition, Italian shrewdness, Iberian pride, Gallic philosophy, and English apathy—the one perpetually struggling with the other, without either, for a moment, obtaining the ascendancy. Born in Ireland, educated in Scotland, polished in Italy, and bronzed in Britain—he was originally intended for the church; but the circumscribed limits of his theological researches excluded him from the interior of the holy sanctuary, and confined the specimens of his art to the sadly solemn precincts of the church-yard, where innumerable monuments will remain to the end of time, of his industry, skill, popularity, and experience.

Miss Woodford had been confined several days, when the silence of her seclusion was broke in upon by a visit from the Duke of Heartwing; and her weary eyes were at length open to all the horrors of
her

her situation. The cold contempt with which she treated his philanthropic visit—for every eccentricity is now honoured with that exalted title—convinced his Grace that her intellects still retained the strong power of discriminating the immeasurable distance betwixt humanity and ostentation. She received him with the marked and unassuming propriety of good-breeding, while he displayed that consciousness of superior rank which chilled her bosom, as the lofty barren summit of Plinlimmon towers above the calm but fertile valley, which displays the gifts of nature, even amidst the glooms that would overwhelm it.

The astonishment and disdain which filled Miss Woodford's bosom was, by her illustrious visitor, mistaken for the timidity of awed respect; while, in proportion as she smothered her indignation, he grew great in self-importance, proving the forbearance of suffering worth, when opposed to the pride of adventitious consequence. With kind and sympathising pity the noble visitor lamented her misfortunes, commiserated her situation, and with the same breath, turning to Doctor Pimpernel, ridiculed her sorrow-stricken looks, remarked the ruthless ravages of undeserved affliction, and pompously took his leave, to seek the society of men without feeling, and women without shame! Little did this proud epitome, this breathing picture of exalted life, reflect, that

All outward semblance of attractive grace,
Hereditary splendours, beauty, valour,
Wit, learning, fancy, eloquence divine!
Where godlike VIRTUE dwells not in the soul,
May feed upon the vapour Adulation,
And boast an unsubstantial glitt'ring name,
That dazzles only for a fleeting day:
While innate GLORY shall outstrip the grave,
And shine, when all of pageantry and pride
(like the false meteor on the wings of night)
Shall waste in empty air!*"

* Sicilian Lover.

G 2

CHAP.

C H A P. XX.

THE visit which Miss Woodford received from the Duke of Heartwing, roused her torpid spirits to a new exertion; she had, previous to her confinement, received a letter from Colonel Aubrey, liberally offering her his hand, and promising to bury her indiscretion in eternal oblivion. This noble and generous conduct may be condemned by the fastidious; but it will not fail to excite admiration in the bosom that is softened by humanity. There are few men, born and educated in the great world, who would take to their arms a repentant wanderer, and allow, that a life of sober virtue has power to compensate for the criminality of a single moment: but there are many who will readily resign their domestic treasure to the licentious embraces of another, and even glory in the boast of being wedded to a sanctioned wanton! Which of the two is the most honourable character, I shall leave modern sophists to determine: my opinion has long been decisive on the subject.

After a week's seclusion Miss Woodford escaped from her den of persecution, and, not knowing whither to seek an asylum, passed the night of her emancipation in wandering about the fields near Hamstead. Soon after day-break she was discovered by Mr. Optic, who had heard of her confinement, and was hastening to apprise her of her situation. Fainting with fatigue and nearly exhausted for want of nourishment, she sunk into his arms as he approached her; and the only power which was left her to express her sorrows, or her sense of his kindness, was that of tears; they flowed abundantly—they drew from his feeling heart a sympathetic tribute, which stoics may smile at, but which sensibility would be proud to boast as its purest, sweetest attribute! His was not the superficial ostentation of huma-

humanity—His ideas of friendship are best known by his own classical and harmonious delineation—

———“ By friendship’s skill divine,
All scenes delight—all seasons shine;
That, when the storms of winter roll,
With constant spring can charm the soul,
And bid the rose of pleasure blow,
Mid poverty’s surrounding snow.”

As soon as Miss Woodford was awakened from the dream of astonishment which Mr. Optic’s presence had occasioned, she intreated that he would conduct her to her mother. He obeyed, and attended her to that home which maternal fondness never closed against her. But her chagrin was infinite when a strange servant informed her, that Mrs. Woodford, her health being greatly impaired by sorrow for the absence and mental derangement of her daughter, had, by the persuasions of Doctor Pimpernel, consented the same morning to set out with Lady Kencarth for Bristol. She also received farther intelligence, that Colonel Aubrey was at that port, waiting to sail for Gibraltar; and that Mr. Ainsforth had departed for Glenowen, to form a matrimonial alliance with Miss Hanbury.—The last erroneous report, I afterwards found, had been conveyed to Miss Woodford by the desire of Sir Sidney Aubrey. Mr. Optic attended the fair fugitive to the house of Lady Kencarth, where she found her thoughtless but generous cousin the Viscount, that instant setting out for Bristol. He offered her his protection; and she knew his heart. They therefore departed together, after pouring forth a thousand grateful acknowledgments for Mr. Optic’s kind and benevolent interference.

The brief narrative being ended, I could not forbear to express my indignation at the malignant folly of Sir Sidney Aubrey. It seemed as if he knew no

gratification in life equal to that of persecuting me. He had already wrested every hope from my bosom, by depriving me of Isabella, and with a mischievous delight, which was the very wantonness of cruelty, he endeavoured to prevent my making an honourable recompence for the wrongs I had heaped upon Miss Woodford. His only delight, thought I, is the pleasure of irritating my weary mind, in hopes that I shall fly from persecution to the quiet of a grave! Then, shall I yield; and by expiring prove myself a coward? Shall I leave a wretch to revel in those joys, of which he has made me bankrupt? Shall the little tyranny of infancy ripen into mature oppression, and my despot live to triumph? These tacit questions, originating in the just indignation of offended pride, rebounded on my heart, and bruised its aching fibres. I writhed beneath the agony of thought, till resentment fixing in my breast, anticipated revenge—final, exemplary, terrible revenge.

The next sensation that possessed my mind was compunction for my conduct towards Miss Woodford; for it has ever been a decided opinion in my mind, that the man who first seduces a woman from the paths of chastity is accessory to all the ills that may await her during the remaining hours of her existence. To him the aching mind applies for solace, the trembling bosom for protection, the closing eye for that mild and contrite tear, which should embalm the dust, polluted by his passions. Are these the offices of modern gallantry? are such the graced attentions evinced by the existing race of man? For what does the lover in these enlightened times seduce his unsuspecting victim?—For the vanity of conquest! Whom does he consider in the triumph of sensuality?—Himself! What breast will condemn the libertine in the circles of congenial depravity?—None! Then where is woman to seek for that oblivion of thought which can alone render her existence
 tole-

tolerable?—Either in a daring round of dissipation, or in the grave!

I was roused from my reverie by the appearance of Miss Woodford. Merciful God! how did my heart throb when I beheld her—emaciated, trembling, and feeble as she stood before me! I flew towards her, she sunk upon a chair, and, bursting into tears, overwhelmed me with affliction. Lord Kencarth, during my reverie, had quitted the room, and I had once more an opportunity of pouring forth the anguish of my heart at the feet of my unfortunate victim. I conjured her to tranquillize her mind,—to unfold the determination of her bosom: and, if she was still averse to an union with Colonel Aubrey, to bestow on me that hand which would do honour to my family.

She looked earnestly at me during several minutes. The tenderness of expiring passion tempered the stern gaze of indignation, and with a firm impressive tone, she answered—"Never, Walsingham! Oh! *never!* The delirium of affection is over; and the pride of insulted love now claims dominion in my bosom. Since I could not fascinate your mind by the purity of virtue, I am neither so vain nor so believing as to hope, that, robbed of the jewel reputation, you will respect my feelings, or sooth them into self-acquittal; the pride of my heart has outlived the purity of my fame. If I was beneath your protection and esteem, I am still above your pity."

"Honour me, at least, with your friendship," said I.

"I will not promise you even that," replied Miss Woodford. "Friendship may rapidly ripen into love; but love requires a length of time before it can soften into friendship. A thousand gradations must mark a diminution of the interesting emotions of the heart, which are wholly different from those of a

mental nature. The cold respect of friendship is an insult to the memory of love; for the despot who "rules a tyrant, if he rules at all," having once been in possession of unbounded sway, will not condescend to become a pensioner on the mental charity of his vassal, till the reign of dominion is recommenced by a new source of triumphs, and another object occupies the mournful vacuum, which is still aching in the bosom. Men may talk of sober friendship growing out of deeply-rooted love: it is a fine romantic species of sophistry, invented by caprice to soothe the victims of a deluded faith; a pleasing, placid mask, calculated to conceal the sickening features of disgust, and to cheat the senses with a shadow of that passion, which time, and the fickleness of folly, have completely vanquished."

"You think too severely of our sex," said I, "when you suppose that respect, esteem, and friendship, cease with love."

"Ah, Walsingham!" replied Miss Woodford, shaking her head with a melancholy expression, "you know not the meaning of the word. There is only one sort of love, but there are a thousand different copies of it*."

"What was the attachment of Heloise to St. Preux?" said I.

"Love," replied Amelia. "The great delineator of Nature, who formed those imaginary beings, knew that it was love. The rectitude of a finely organized mind may teach it to fulfil the duties of domestic life with decency and honour: gratitude may insure attention, and moral virtue be the basis of fidelity: but all this may be done at the same moment that the senses are possessed, and the bosom animated by ten-

* "Il n'y a que d'une sorte d'amour; mais il y en a mille différentes copies."

derer, warmer affections for another object. I could be the lover of my friend ; but the vanity of the human heart will not, till after every trace of passion is exterminated, permit us to be the friend of him whom it has once acknowledged as a lover. I do not pretend to assert, that the ardent fondness of the passion, the tender hopes, the zealous assiduities, which characterise a lover in the early enthusiasm of pursuit, can last beyond possession of their object : these do not constitute love ; they are the mere appendages, worn on the holiday of expectation, and cast off when reason points out a milder, purer source of pleasure. The mind then embraces a more solid gratification ; the object of its affection—for I will not admit of its cold shadow friendship—then becomes a part of our existence. We find it as closely united with vitality, as the air we breathe ; it is a sort of second self, which must either be acknowledged as such, or, being torn by violence from its natural home, become an alien for ever."

" Is there not a pure sensation which may be felt when the ardent passions become harmonized by time and nature ? " said I.

" Unquestionably," answered Miss Woodford ; " but still it is love, not friendship. That being does not deserve the proud distinction, the transcendent merit of truly loving, who could not pass a life of calm enjoyment wholly uncontaminated by every sensual motive ; who could not retain the rich and sacred impulse of the soul, not only amidst the busy, dark vicissitudes of fortune, but even in a state of lasting separation."

I sighed at the idea — she continued—after a glance of reproof, which I felt more than I should have done the severest reproaches—

" How sceptical was that emotion of your heart ! " said she. " But it is the custom of your sex to doubt the enthusiasm of our's in points of affection, till we

are taught to suspect it ourselves; and that sincerity, which requires a watch over its thoughts and actions, will soon feel an inclination to revolt. We may indulge the glowing illusions of fancy till we teach ourselves to think them real, particularly if the chimeras which they present are pleasing to the mind, or gratifying to the senses. By such soothing deceptions, the shadows of caprice grow into substantial joys, till time invigorates the spring of affection, and the fascination becomes not only strong, but lasting. These are the causes and effects of pure and genuine attachment, springing from, and existing only in minds of a peculiar and exalted cast: the selfish sensualist was not born to know them."

"Yet I cannot help thinking, that more real felicity owes its birth to friendship than to love," said I.

"That point I will not dispute with you," replied Miss Woodford; "but the heart must have some strong and interesting sensation of attachment, or it will become an aching vacuum, believe me. Call it friendship, call it love: but whichever name you give it, remember that it must stand alone; it must not be dependent on another species of enchantment, or originate in any remote impression on the passions."

"I am rather inclined to think that apathy is more desirable than either," said I; "and that to escape the pangs of sensibility, I would readily relinquish its enjoyments"

"How false is such reasoning!" interrupted Miss Woodford. "I recollect the words of an elegant writer, who says, 'Is there a man upon the face of the earth who would deliberately accept of all the wealth, and all the affluence this world can bestow, if offered to him upon the severe terms of his being unconnected with a single mortal whom he could love, or by whom he should be beloved*?'"

* Melmoth's Translation of Cicero's Lælius.

We were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who came to announce the approach of Mrs. Woodford and Colonel Aubrey. Amelia's cheek turned pale, and the blood suddenly forsook her lip, as she sunk into my arms, overwhelmed with contending emotions. I knew not what to do: I could not think of leaving her in such a situation, and I knew, at the same time, that to be discovered with Miss Woodford, whom I had renounced, apparently, would convey suspicions injurious to my sincerity, and fatal to her last hope of happiness.

After several minutes had elapsed,—minutes, no less perilous to her than painful to myself,—I observed the first tinge of returning circulation, casting a feeble flush over her cheek, and on her lip, which quivered as she addressed me.

“ Oh, Walsingham !” said she, with a feeble tone of intreaty, “ I conjure you to depart,—to leave me, for ever. Your presence will be but a poor return for Colonel Aubrey's generous conduct,—though a certain source of agony to my afflicted parent. You have once involved me in the deepest abyss of misery ; do not again expose me to contempt and sorrow. You cannot, oh, Walsingham ! you will not, a second time, be the destroyer of Colonel Aubrey's hopes ;—for, with all my frailties, all my imperfections, he still loves me.”

The recollection of what I had long felt for Isabella, convinced me that the human heart will sometimes linger round the very shadow of departed hopes:—that “ though we are driven from the sanctuary, our thoughts still cleave to the threshold.”

“ Can you be happy with Colonel Aubrey ?” said I.

Miss Woodford sighed, and her eyes uttered a thousand answers, which her tongue had not power to express. At last, with a faltering articulation, she replied, “ I can be tranquil ; I can be resigned ; I shall obey a dear and adored parent ; I shall prove

my gratitude to a worthy—honourable man; and I shall quit this scene of painful humiliation—for ever.”

Lord Kencarth now rushed into the room:—“Walsingham,” cried he, “by all that is fair and honourable, you must instantly be off; or my pretty coz will, by prozing with you, lose a husband who will patch up the flaws you have made in her reputation.—Come, my hearty, kiss little Milly, and bid her farewell.—What has passed must be forgotten, and she'll make a better wife than half her acquaintances after all.” Then turning towards Miss Woodford he exclaimed, “Dash my wig! why Milly, what a doleful phiz you make! You look as though you hadn't a smile left to pay the parson. Quiz me, coz, why I shou'dn't wonder if you sung the black psalm, when you should be queering us with love, honour, and obey.—Cheer up, my neat one! brighten your sparklers, and tip old wigby a twitch of the heart, in return for his gold padlock. Why, if you pipe your eye, and sport your glum mazzard at the church door,—dish me! but the joiner will fly off in a tangent, and you'll get no spousy after all, little Milly.”

“Walsingham! I conjure you, once more, to be-gone,” said Miss Woodford, turning aside to conceal a tear, which all her cousin's uncouth raillery could not repel.

I advanced towards the door, and at the moment when I was bound by honour, delicacy, and gratitude, to relinquish her for ever, I first began to feel a wish, which owed its origin to my perverse nature, ever prone to resist where constraint was necessary; and had there been no such being upon earth as Colonel Aubrey, I should at that moment have proudly claimed the name of husband from the unhappy and neglected Amelia.

Mrs. Woodford's arrival with Colonel Aubrey compelled me to quit the room. I had not resolution to
utter

utter a single adieu, but hastened to my chamber; where, after passing a few minutes in busy mingling rumination, I ordered a chaise, with post-horses, to be got ready immediately.

C H A P. XXI.

JUST as I was stepping into the chaise, Lord Kencarth followed me, and insisted on being my companion to London. I would have been thankful for his society at any other period; but in the state of mind which I then felt myself inclined to indulge, the solitude of a desert would have promised the most pleasing retreat for rumination. I could at that moment have relinquished the world for ever; I could have beheld the barren summits, and the tawny woods of Glenowen, with a sober, sweet delight, which is not to be found in the chaos of populated cities.

Lord Kencarth entered the chaise, after ordering his servant to follow with his own carriage,—and to meet us at Devizes. I was little disposed to talk, and I knew that the young lord was still less inclined to taciturnity. In order to avoid trivial conversation, I pleaded the indisposition which I really felt, and which was the effect of my last twelve hours agitation. But with that boisterous flow of animation, which is generally the attendant of strong health of body, and feeble organization of mind, he began what he called shaking off my lethargy, and raising my spirits at the expence of my understanding.

“Never think, my hearty,” cried his lordship;—“leave pedants and cynics to think;—let us be jolly: you don’t know how I make the people stare as I pass through towns and villages.—Why, I am as well known on the Bath road as the milestones.—You shall see how I’ll quizz the knowing ones. D—me, the girls fly helter-skelter when they see my carriage. as
though

though they were all broke loose from their nurseries."

"I suppose your lordship finds more entertainment in following, than they in flying," interrupted I, merely for the sake of saying something, my thoughts still wandering to distant objects.

"You never were more mistaken in your life," replied the young lord; "for however I may give my tongue a licence, dash my wig if I hav n't a heart as white as a snowball. My pleasures are all as harmless as the gambols of a kitten. I hate twaddling with other people's happiness, while I find that I have plenty to do in taking care of my own. Besides, the world is wide enough for us all; and he that can't find fun without making hearts ache, why, dash me, but he is an ass, and deserves to bear the burden of a bad conscience."

"I am exactly of your lordship's opinion," said I. "But before I judge how far your theory and your practice correspond, I should like to know what you call harmless pleasure."

"Why, pleasure that is not productive of harm," replied the young lord.

"Unquestionably," said I; "but most probably we differ as to the acceptation of the term."

"Whose judgment and experience are most likely to obtain credit?" cried Lord Kencarth; tell me that, my hearty, and then we'll open our budget of knowledge. 'Tis easy to preach, my good fellow, but one is sometimes apt to forget the text, and become a twaddler."

"I do not pretend to inculcate any great portion of moral doctrine," said I, "for there lives not a being, whose conduct through life has been more frequently marked with error."

"So much the better!" exclaimed his lordship. "Quiz my jasey, if I don't revere your spirit, and honour your discernment. Why there's nothing like
a little

a little enterprize.—Dash through thick and thin, hustle old Prudence, kick up a row whenever she attempts to oppose you, and d—me you are the thing, my hearty.”

“ Are you not apprehensive that the opinions of mankind, in general, will condemn such conduct ?” said I.

“ Who cares ?” vociferated the young lord : “ not I, by all that’s quizzical ! Look at the conduct of older men than I :—they don’t mind the world :—we all act alike ; then who has any business to find fault ?—tell me that, my hearty. Dish my sconce ! the higher the rank, the greater right to be amused. I have tried all sorts of sports :—I’m up to any thing :—the whole world knows Kencarth for a pupil of the true school. No man can upset a watch-box, shy at a shop window, quiz a citizen, dish a deep one, queer an old woman, or cajole a young one, better than I can. Do you know how I have passed my time since I came to years of discretion ?”

“ No, truly,” answered I.

“ Then, dash my wig, but I’ll tell you. Why, in hunting, racing, rowing, quizzing, queering, badgering, boxing, mumming, drinking, driving, and making love. But this is not all ;—I am a deep one at the fine arts ;—I can draw caricatures, play at cricket, navigate my own cutter, fight a bull-dog, and write rum chimes for our catch-club.”

“ You must find such a variety of occupations fatiguing both to your mind and body,” said I.

“ Not a bit,” replied his lordship, with a shrug of indifference. “ I considered them as parts of my education ; but they didn’t do ; I soon grew tired of them, and cut the connection ; for I almost broke my neck fox-hunting ; was taken in, racing, by my groom’s playing booty ; upset my wherry, rowing, and was near drowning little Milly ; was nigh dishing my adversary, boxing ; got into a duel for quizzing ;

zing; was hissed off my own stage, mumming; caught a fever with drinking; and was popped into Doctors' Commons for making love."

"Astonishing!" said I, "that harmless amusements should be productive of such perilous consequences."

"Give your tongue a holiday," cried the young lord, "and I'll tell you more of the same sort. Queer me, a gentleman can't follow his own fancy now-a-days, but people of low occupations will presume to find fault and condemn one. Would you believe it, my hearty? dash my jasey, if I wasn't threatened with the pillory for drawing caricatures; though the subjects of my pencil were as well known as old copper-face at Charing-Cross. Then, to complete my disappointments, I run my cutter ashore on the Goodwins; broke a friend's leg with a cricket-ball; got my arm dangerously wounded by sparring with my bull-dog, and was voted a bore *nom. con.* at the catch-club! So, dash my wig, but I bought a tandem; put two blood horses before it; mounted a box-coat with twelve collars; sported an old girl of fashion on the wrong side of forty, and kicked up a breeze at all the watering-places, to make the citizens stare, and to prove my nobility.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed I. "The world must greatly edify by such dashing exploits, and your name cannot fail to stand high on the list of modern prowess. But with all your lordship's industry, I do not find that mental improvement has been in the smallest degree an object of consideration."

"There you are out again," replied his lordship; "I am known to be a fellow of infinite taste, and have done more towards the improvement of things, than all your deep ones in both universities. Dash me, but my name ought to be immortalized;—why, I have completely outed all pretenders to the neat thing, since I invented the flap-bang coaches, and sported

sported the tandem. Why, I first proposed premiums for the fiercest breed of bull-dogs,—made subscriptions for boxing,—and produced a fellow who could eat a live cat in the space of twenty minutes : and as for fashion, dash my jasey, if I didn't introduce crops, high-crowned hats, and twelve-inch bludgeons to all the fashionables from Whitechapel to St. James's. Why, do you know that I have two polygraphs ?”

“ I do not comprehend the term,” said I.

“ Dish my sponce ! where have you lived ?” exclaimed his lordship. “ Why, you ought to know that a polygraph is a fellow that apes one's dress and manners as close as one's shadow : one that is up to all our gossip ; is sick, lame, blind, gay, grave, in and out of condition, in imitation of his prototype. Why a true polygraph would break an arm, fracture a leg, knock out an eye, or starve himself into a decline, rather than lose a single trait of his noble original. It was only last year that I wore deep mourning four times, on purpose to dish my shadows in fables. Dash my jasey, but the experiment succeeded ;—my phantoms were taken in :—one of them was nabbed by his tailor, for the bill which he contracted ;—the knowing one smoked the sham, and my shadow was nicked and locked up, for being my representative one hour every day in Pall Mall and Bond-street.”

“ Alas, poor shadow !” exclaimed I ; “ and were you not sorry when you heard of his misfortune ?”

“ No ;—queer my phiz, what signified making wry faces ?” said his lordship, “ I settled the business in a shorter way,—I sent him the money, and promised to wear a drab frock for the next twelve months. Not long after this event, I met with my match in Old Vixen. The creature was as gentle as my grandmother's tabby,—but I gave her a twist of the mazzard that set her upon her pins ; she
fastened

fastened on my arm, and, dash my wig, but she did me. I kept my room three weeks nursing the wound, while my polygraph regularly appeared in Fops-alley and Bond-street during the whole time, with his arm in a sling, and with a phiz as sharp as a hatchet. I sent him word when I got well, and, queer my caxon, but his recovery was astonishing !”

“ The caprices of the human mind are indeed unaccountable,” said I. “ Our ancestors delighted in displaying a proud originality, but the present generation, I find, aims at the very reverse, by imitating even the deformities of nature.”

“ Come, none of your musty morality,” cried his lordship ; “ I know you, my hearty ;—I am not to be taken in by a lankey face and a sermon. I know how to live, though I don’t preach virtue and forbearance. I never debauched an honest girl ; robbed a flat at a faro-table, or run a friend through the body, to enhance my reputation. My sports are all in style ; -- I please myself, and hurt nobody ;—I have my tandem, my cutter, my polygraph, my bull-dog, and my old woman ; and, dash my jasey, but I am as happy as any prince in the universe.”

“ Very possibly,” said I, while reflection darted across my brain, leaving an impression of the most sombre nature. After a pause of some moments, during which imagination wandered over past and present prospects, while a sigh involuntarily struggled within my breast, I again addressed his lordship : “ What hours in your busy *routine* of amusements do you devote to rest ?” said I.

“ Why I always dose at the gab-shop,” replied he ; “ I got a feat because it was the right thing. But, as my colleague employs half his time in writing speeches, and the other half in learning to repeat them, I am content to be taken in as a sleeping partner. My elocution consists of monosyllables ;—*ayer* and *noes* settle the affairs of the nation, under the present
sent.

sent system of things, as well as all the slack-jaw of modern orators :—why, they all know that 'tis labour in vain, and I am too wise to have my ears bored and my tongue tired for nothing."

" But are your constituents satisfied with the services you render them ?" said I.

" I don't trouble my head about that," replied his lordship. " I bought my seat ; and if Englishmen will submit their rights to the degradation of being sold, they cannot wonder at any use we think proper to make of them."

By the time that his lordship had concluded his remark, to the truth of which my mind gave tacit acquiescence, the post-boy stopped at Devizes. We were ushered from our chaise with considerable ceremony by the landlord of the inn ; and I, who, when alone and oppressed with wrongs, was treated like the veriest vagabond, was now, as the companion of Lord Kencarth, distinguished by the most profound respect. Bows that almost met the ground, and titles that are promiscuously bestowed on every appendage to nobility, followed us to the drawing-room. The landlord's zeal was laborious,—his countenance animated,—his language obsequious, and his memory conveniently short, whenever he glanced at my features ; while I, with my pencil, wrote on the window-shutter the following

S T A N Z A S.

Since Fortune's smiles alone can give
Respect to fools, to knaves renown ;
Let Reason bid me calmly live,
And Fortune mark me with her frown.

For who would buy the wretched state
Which conscious vice or dulness knows ?
Or who be vainly, meanly great
With pow'r that from oppression grows ?

While

While Nature, with a partial hand,
 Her darling children beckons forth;
 While fools and knaves usurp command,
 And Fortune flies from modest worth.

Then give, O FORTUNE! all thy store
 To insects, of a sunny day:—
 While I the paths of TRUTH explore,
 And smile the darkest hours away.

Oh, Rosanna! how vain, how empty are these mortals, who, as the summer gale sustains the golfer, are upborne on the breath of popularity by their own lightness; while those who possess the more solid virtues are condemned to bear their unprofitable load, through the gloomy paths of sorrow and obscurity!

C H A P. XXII.

WHILE Lord Kencarth visited the stable to purchase a hunter which had been sold by Lady Emily Delvin, in part payment of Lord Linbourne's debt, I strolled towards the Black Lion to inquire after honest Ned, and to satisfy my mind respecting the fate of the young highwayman. On my arrival I found the house uninhabited; and was informed by a villager, whose cottage was not far distant, that the landlord, being suspected of having some concern in stopping the carriage of Lady Emily Delvin, had prudently absconded, to avoid the danger of a criminal prosecution. I was apprehensive that any minute inquiries on my part might increase suspicion; and therefore, without farther investigation of the business, I returned to Devizes.

I found the young Lord delighted with his bargain, surrounded by grooms and ostlers, drinking and swearing with most condescending courtesy. All his polished vocabulary was displayed with familiar ease; while his jolly companions drank to his 'health and prosperity.'

prosperity; as he paid one hundred guineas for a beast not worth fifty; and which, being both vicious and unruly, had already endangered the lives of the most expert horsemen. I perceived that it would be in vain to offer any thing like dissuasion from the purchase; his lordship knew the ostler to be "a fellow of infinite worth—one of the right sort—up to a bargain, but honest as the light"—and I was too prudent to calumniate a great man's favourite, where I knew that admonition would be considered as impertinent interference, and while I reflected, that to attempt restraining some minds, is only to propel them on to new acts of folly and indiscretion.

As soon as dinner was over, four horses were ordered to Lord Kencarth's chaise, and I endeavoured to excuse myself from accompanying his lordship any farther. My mind was little disposed to amusement, and my heart panted for the quiet of seclusion. It was in vain that I intreated his lordship to proceed without me.

"Dash me if you shall go," said he; "I want to hire a tutor, to travel with me, and you are the thing to a tittle, my hearty; therefore make no excuses—for stay you must—and so settle your phiz, and be quiet. Quiz me, if I don't give you five hundred a year to teach me philosophy—I know every thing else that is worth learning; and when I have got a little of that, why, queer me if I am not up to any thing."

Necessity being a powerful stimulator, and Adversity at that moment fixing her haggard eyes upon me, I thought it most prudent to accept his lordship's proposal, and to pursue the paths of mental humiliation in the new character of, what is politely termed, a modern bear-leader.

The young Lord was enraptured with the idea of flying over the continent, and of displaying his wealth at the expence of his reputation; while I anticipated the
the

the many disgraces from which reason would shrink, were it not sustained by the all-powerful force of long-established custom.

The chaise was ordered to the door, and we were descending to depart, when Lord Kencorth, stopping short, exclaimed—"Dash my jasey, Ainsforth, but you shall ride my new horse. I want to try him, and to find out whether he has any vices."

"I thank your lordship," answered I; "but having no inclination to break my neck, I must beg leave to decline making the experiment."

"Poh, poh!" cried his lordship; "come, let us see what sort of an equestrian you are. Do you know that I can ride three horses?"

"Therefore the better able to manage one," interrupted I.

"Bravo! my hearty! you are a deep one!" said the young Lord. "But I am not so easily gulled. The horse is a good horse—the neat thing—no daisy-cutter—a nice bit of blood—fit for a prince; and quiz me, but you must mount him, I want to see his paces—to observe how he carries his head—whether he has a good forehead—and what sort of a figure he makes over a five-barred gate."

I returned no answer, but smiled.

"What! tutor!" cried his lordship, "Are you dumb-founded?—don't be frightened—Why you may guide him with a thread along a six-inch deal board for a thousand."

"Since the task is so easy, your lordship will act wisely to undertake it," said I. "Yet let me caution you to be careful; for if I am rightly informed, the animal is vicious."

"I like him the better," replied his lordship; "a beast without some shew of spirit is not worth his keep. Dash me, if I would maintain a cat that was not a match for her peer. You shall see some fun before you and I have lived together a fortnight.

I know

I know how to employ time and to acquire knowledge."

"Unquestionably," said I; "for experience is the foundation of wisdom; and in the experimental way your lordship's industry is unequalled. Yet, let me advise you not to follow the impulse of an enterprising spirit, beyond the bounds of reason and reflection."

"Is that your way, my hearty?" inquired his lordship archly. "Do you always reflect before you decide? Do you look before you leap? Queer my caxon, if you are not a rum one! but you can't do me over; I am not so easily bamboozled—I'm above your match, my dainty; you can't humbug me."

"That I am the most erring of Nature's children, I readily acknowledge," said I; "but we are all eager to preach what we are slow to practise."

"Why that's honest, dash my jasey!" cried his lordship; "and, in order to please both parties in the present case, you shall continue to preach, and I to practise. You say my horse is a bad horse—I say he is a good one; you say he is vicious—I maintain that he is as kind-natured as a lamb; you think him dear—I know that I have him a bargain; you are afraid to ride him—and therefore I am determined to shew you some sport. So here goes—neck or nothing—little venture little have, all the world over—queer my caxon, d——me!"

At the conclusion of this eloquent and fashionable oration, his lordship mounted the hunter; and, setting off full speed, was out of sight before I had time to enter the carriage. I ordered the post-boy to follow him, and we departed from the inn door with all possible expedition, amidst the shrugs and sneers of grooms, jockeys, ostlers, waiters, and travellers, who unanimously anticipated the fate of the equestrian

equestrian hero, in his new trial of adventurous prowess.

We had not proceeded three miles on the road towards London when, in passing through a village, I observed several persons assembled round a cottage door, and peeping through the casements of the lower windows into a room which faced the high-road. Curiosity led me to inquire the cause of their earnest attention, when a little boy informed me, that a groom had been thrown from his horse, and was taken to the cottage to have his wounds dressed. I instantly sprung from the chaise, and forced my way through the inquisitive throng : on entering the house, I discovered Lord Kencarth bleeding and almost senseless.

The wound which he had received in his fall was near the right temple, and the effusion of blood for a time suspended all sensation : with proper care and applications, however, in the space of an hour, he was able to speak ; and with my assistance, after he had liberally repaid the cottager's hospitality, to enter his carriage. The horse, after he had dismounted his venturesome rider, proceeded on full speed towards Marlborough, where, on our arrival at the Castle, we found him in the hands of the ostler.

My noble pupil, though faint with his loss of blood, could not be prevailed on to remain quiet during the stage from the scene of disaster to the inn, where I proposed resting that night : a surgeon was sent for, and the wound examined. The result of his opinion was favourable to our hopes, and his Lordship was informed that on the following day he might travel with safety.

During the whole evening my pupil talked of nothing but of returning to Devizes, to "give the ostler his gruel" for having taken him in. It was in vain that I endeavoured to reconcile his mind to the event ; in vain, that I reminded him of my original opinion of the animal ; the young lord was duped, and self-love

love was mortified, though self preservation was not deemed an object of the least importance. Exploits of an eccentric nature constituted the labour and amusement of his lordship's life, and wherever he failed in his enterprises, his vanity being wounded, neither reason nor conviction of his own errors in judgment could reconcile him to the misfortune: for it is a maxim of Rochefoucauld, that "self-love is the greatest of flatterers;" and we are apt to admire the offspring of our own imagination, however it may be fashioned by bad taste, or distorted by the false decorations of an inexperienced parent.

Early on the following morning Lord Kencarth, after selling his hunter to the master of the inn for twenty pounds, set out towards London. His head was somewhat cooled by the decrease of circulation, and his pocket lighter by the purchase of the preceding day: but as his mind was irritated, and his pride humbled by an event, which either proved want of dexterity or deficiency of judgment; in either case it was dangerous to renew the topic; and my pupil being little inclined to think of any other, we pursued our journey in sullen silence, till we reached Newbury.

C H A P. XXIII.

WE stopped at Newbury only while we changed horses, and immediately proceeded on our *route* towards London. Lord Kencarth being anxious to attend a boxing-match which was to take place near Hounslow on the following morning, the post-boys were ordered to "make the best of their way," and I may with truth affirm, that they did not fail to obey the injunction. We flew with almost incredible velocity over plains, through villages, and along lanes, to the no small terror of those whom we met, and to the extreme peril of our own existence—Lord

Kencarth encouraging the postillions with promises of liberal payment, and I every instant expecting little less than annihilation.

When we stopped within thirty miles of the metropolis, my noble pupil proposed mounting the leading horse-himself. It was to no purpose I reminded him of his recent accident, or anticipated the probability of his bringing on a fever by so rash an undertaking—the horses were stopped, and the young lord, after desiring the post-boy to take care of his tutor, ordered him into the chaise, while he mounted the weary animal, and, with true equestrian grace, again set forward on his journey.

We had not proceeded more than two miles when we were overtaken by a stage coach. The driver endeavoured to pass us, but Lord Kencarth was too ambitious to suffer such a humiliation. The son of the whip, with a contemptuous smile, commenced the career of glory. Never did the car of a victor, in ancient days of valour, dash through the fields of carnage with more triumphant dignity. Side by side, wheel almost touching wheel, did we continue to urge the flying steeds, and to roll in clouds of dust near three miles, when one of those slow nuisances, a broad-wheeled waggon in a narrow lane, presented its ponderous form, and menaced desolation. The stage-coachman continued the contest with unabated velocity. My pupil was too determined to give in, and, by endeavouring to hustle his antagonist, overset the chaise into a deep ditch, while the conqueror pursued his way with most insulting triumph.

I could scarcely help laughing, though every bone in my body was shook by the concussion. The noble postillion was unhurt, and no damage was done, except breaking the lamps and windows of the carriage. Being near an inn, a chaise was speedily procured, and with fresh horses we continued our course;

I, heart-

I, heartily tired of "travelling in stile," and Lord Kencarth vowing vengeance against the victorious coachman.

We did not overtake the hero of the day till we came to Hounslow-heath. It was near the close of twilight, and the dusky light barely presented the object of my pupil's indignation to his inquisitive gaze. The stage-coach proceeded, and we followed, till we stopped at the inn door, when Lord Kencarth, leaping from the chaise and springing forward, seized the coachman by the leg, and obliged him to descend from that eminence, which, in the eyes of my pupil, was more desirable than the laurelled car in which the son of Jupiter Ammon overlooked the towering walls of Babylon.

The coachman, elated with success in his first trial of dexterity, flattered himself with the hope that victory would crown the termination of his exploit. But Lord Kencarth was an expert pugilist; he had taken lessons during several months from the most able professors of the science, and was considered as a finished master of that art, which, though strongly characteristic of national intrepidity, has sometimes displayed a degree of ferocity, disgraceful to a civilized people.

A combat fierce and terrible instantaneously commenced. I intreated my pupil to remember his wounded head, and informed the coachman that his antagonist was not in a condition for the rencontre. The inequality of the combatants, in point of personal strength, was evident to every by-stander; but though the hero of the whip was as athletic as Hercules, the young lord was more than his match in dexterity. There was also another requisite in which his opponent was miserably deficient; this quality, without which the powers of Atlas would be insufficient in a contest for victory, was courage. The coachman was faint-hearted; the noble possessed

the nerves of a young lion. The former, after a sharp onset of twelve minutes, gave in, and the tumultuous spectators bore the latter in triumph on their shoulders:—but mark the sequel. The vanquished sufferer was so severely beaten, that his life was despaired of: one arm was rendered for ever useless; and my pupil was induced, by that generosity which predominated over all his eccentricities, to settle an annuity of one hundred pounds on his maimed antagonist, as a voluntary recompence for the misfortune.

On the following morning we repaired to a gravel pit, which was fixed on for the theatre of pugilistic exhibition. A vast concourse of persons had assembled at an early hour, and my pupil pointed out the most popular amateurs of the science, from the gartered noble to the driver of a dust cart. There all distinctions were levelled, and a condescending familiarity was uniformly displayed, from the rank of my Lord Duke, to the lowest link-boy that followed his nightly occupation in the avenues of the theatres.

The contest was soon decided by an unlucky blow, which, to use my pupil's expression, dished the scone of the ill-fated victim. He fell; and while the eager throng shouted victorious clamours, the wretched being ended his career of glory, as he poured forth an agonised sigh which closed his busy scene for ever.

The multitude was scattered in all directions, while I remained, with a few thinking mortals, rapt in a reverie, and gazing on the lifeless pugilist. Poor atom of mortal frailty! thought I, how ghastly, and how horrible thou look'st! thy swift career of false ambition is for ever closed, and thy last act of prowess will throw a shadow on thy name, which will tarnish thy hard-earned laurels, and stigmatise thy memory. These reflections led on to the wide theatre

tre of human nature, where the foldier, statesman, poet, and philosopher, play their adventurous scene; and if, by any chance, they fail in one great enterprise, their last disgrace is alone remembered, while the labours of whole years are buried in oblivion.

C H A P. XXIV.

POWERFULLY impressed by the awful and unexpected exit of the ill-fated pugilist, I quitted his corpse, and strolled pensively towards Hounslow. The multitude had departed from the scene of death with little sorrow, and still less reflection; a desperate mortal's life was deemed a trifling sacrifice in comparison with the sports which his exploits had afforded at former periods, and the only regret which his noble patrons felt on the present awful occasion, originated in the certainty that he could amuse them no longer.

On my arrival at the inn, I instantly inquired after my eccentric pupil; but he had adjourned to a neighbouring public-house with the victor, whose situation was only one degree better than that of his lifeless antagonist. While I sat ruminating at the window which opened to the high road, my fancy wandering back to the solitudes of my childhood, and my heart sickening with disgust at the prospect before me, a deep but impressive voice addressed me—

“ Something, if you please, to a poor old seaman, your honour; a little matter, with the blessing of God, and I shall be thankful.”

I turned towards the venerable suppliant, and my heart beat with a quickened circulation the instant I fixed my eyes upon him. He retired a few paces, and taking off his hat, exposed to view a head thinly scattered with white hairs, and which, added to a

peculiar cast of expression that marked his countenance, could not fail to excite veneration and pity. He rested on his crutch, still holding his hat with both his hands before his breast. A slight shower was at that moment falling; the drops had spangled his silver hairs before I recollected his situation. I desired him to cover his head - he bowed, and obeyed my orders; not as if to gratify his own convenience, but with that graced complacency which seems to experience pleasure in harmonizing the feelings of others.

I looked earnestly in his face; the deep lines of age were strongly engraven, though they had a sort of zigzag expression, which seemed the effect of a fierce struggle with the world's unkindness. Now, thought I, if unsophisticated features present a faithful tablet of the mind, shew me a philanthropist or a philosopher, who can compare *traits* indicative of truth and honesty with this tempest-beaten old sailor.

His countenance was sun-burnt and withered; it presented the tawny hue of a rich autumn, rather than the freezing vacancy of a long and dreary winter: yet I could not help thinking it exhibited something of sorrow so touching, that I would not have stirred a step, or turned my eyes to any other object at that moment, to have been made the first potentate in the universe. So much for fascination, and now for sympathy—the gradations, in some instances, are as rapid as our thoughts.

He rested on his crutch, and looking mournfully on his mutilated limb, which had till that moment escaped my notice, heaved a sigh which would have pierced a bosom of marble. "Sixty years, your honour, and nothing left but a heavy heart, and this worn out bit of timber. Hard fate for a poor old son of the green waves, your honour."

"With whom have you served?" said I.

"I served

"I served but little, your honour; yet I saw warm work, and many a brave soul buried in the rough ocean:—but an honourable grave is preferable to a long life of hardships."

A sudden gust of wind blew back the white hairs which partly covered his cheek, and a big drop rolled rapidly from the corner of his eye. I watched it, and I don't know why, but I was sorry that it fell to the ground. I would have taught myself to believe that it was not a tear. No matter, thought I; if it is the effect of the cold and cutting wind, it is nearly the same thing. He again addressed me—

"I don't wish to be troublesome, your honour; but it is a sharp day, and my heart is chilled with the cold—a small matter would warm it, my noble master. But if it is your pleasure to deny me, why, God bless you!"

He was going: I glanced my eyes towards the interior of the room where I was sitting; a blazing fire seemed to invite the poor old traveller. "Come in," said I, "and warm thyself, and tell me how thou camest, at this late hour of life, to carry such a passport in thy face, and so sorrowful a heart within thy bosom."

He employed his crutch with new alacrity, and, on my opening a glass door, he entered the apartment.

"I am going to try for Greenwich, your honour," said he sighing. "I never thought to become a burthen on the humanity of my country. But what can I do? I have no property left but my bit of timber, and my heart sinks sadly when I think of happier days."

"You must forget them, my honest fellow," said I, presenting him a few shillings. "Console yourself with the certainty, that if you are not a favourite with fortune, your case is by no means singular."

“Fortnue! your honour——God blefs your kindness,” answered he. “I do not complain of Fortune; she is no friend to honesty: my affliction is more keen than that of poverty. My story is a sad one, your honour; you would not like to hear it. You don’t seem to be one of the rough sort, who can turn with a dry eye from an old sailor’s misfortunes.”

“Well, let me hear it,” said I; “perhaps there may be found a remedy——”

“My sorrow lies deep, your honour.”

Again he paused—

“Not beyond the reach of mortal aid?” said I.

“In the grave, your honour.”

Again he sighed deeply.

“There is no remedy but submission to the will of Heaven;” added he, with a shake of the head, and a melancholy expression of countenance, which increased the strong interest I already felt in his favour.

I have ever been strangely inclined to become a physiognomist; there are features which, somehow or other, seize upon my feelings with unaccountable powers of fascination: I have felt liking and disliking as the form of an eye-brow or the curve of a lip has influenced my fancy; and, nine times in ten, I have proved by experience, that the first impression did not deceive me.

“Come, tell thy story, my honest soul,” said I; “it will relieve thy full heart, and, perhaps, enable it to bear an accumulation of sorrow without breaking it.”

I reached him a chair by the fire-side, and filled him a goblet of wine from a bottle that stood before me; he drank it eagerly. “Now,” said I, “thou wilt be able to get through the business stoutly.”

He pressed his right hand on his breast, and passing the

the left across his eyes, which were nearly overflowing, began his story :—

“ I am a native of Wales, your honour ; I was born among mountains that reached the very sky. My parents were as honest as the light, and I was, at my setting out in life, as happy as the day was long.”

I felt a strong desire to bid him depart ; something of sympathy began to excite emotions which it had long been the labour of my mind to overcome. After a moment's hesitation he proceeded—

“ In my youth I was brought up to husbandry, and many a long summer-day have I laboured in the vallies of Glamorganshire. It was sweet labour, your honour ; for it was followed by rest, and supported by a good conscience. I could wrestle with any youngster of my county, and no lad was better known for a strong arm and a fair character. 'Tis a poor withered fin now, your honour,” said he, stretching forth his arm, and looking at it with a melancholy smile ; “ but time and sorrow will pull down the strongest.

“ At twenty, I fell in love, your honour. The girl was as fresh as a daisy, and had a heart as tender as—your honour's. Little Peggy Gwynn was the prettiest flower that ever grew among the mountains of Glamorgan. It would have done your heart good, your honour, had you seen her dance, and heard her sing ; but she is in Heaven, and her poor Griffith is a beggar.”

Again he paused, and seemed to wander in imagination over the paths of his early life. “ Ah ! your honour,” said he, wiping his eyes, “ had you known her, you would have thought as I did ; she was as fair as a lily, and as innocent as a turtle-dove. But, as fate would have it, the quire fell in love with her, and all kinds of temptations were offered to lead Peggy astray, your honour ; but she

was as virtuous as the light, and turned a deaf ear to all his professions, till her friends, to put her out of his way, sent her to London. It was on a winter morning that she set out; the snow fell and covered the mountains, and the torrents poured along the lanes like a deluge, your honour. I walked by the side of her horse; a kinsman rode before her - she said but little; yet she looked, your honour, as though her heart was breaking. At last we came to the turnpike where we had agreed to part, and her kinsman desired me to return home, and tell her friends that they were safe on the great road to London. If I have a soul to be saved, your honour, I thought I should never survive the separation. I went back, and I tried every way to bear my affliction like a Christian;—but all would not do:—not a mountain nor a valley met my eyes, but it reminded me of Peggy; and life at last became, as it were, a burden, your honour.”

Every vein in my heart throbbed in unison with old Griffith's as he advanced in his story.

“So your honour, one morning in the following spring, just as the sun rose, I set out to follow Peggy. I had scraped together all my store of riches,—not much, your honour,—but it was the reward of honest industry; and resolving to travel on foot, proceeded towards London.

“I was not long on my journey:—love makes a man mighty swift footed, your honour. On my arrival, I inquired my way to the place of Peggy's residence, for she never failed to write every week; and her letters were tallies of her heart, your honour:—I used to keep watch for their arrival as though I was waiting for an enemy; and my heart was as light as a feather whenever I heard that she was well and prosperous. But to return to my story, your honour.

“I found

" I found on my arrival in London that Peggy's relations lived in the far end of the city ; and though I had walked thirty miles since sun-rise, I was nothing faint, your honour, for my courage was kept up by the hope of seeing Peggy. In my way, as fate would have it, what should I meet but a press-gang. I was seized and carried on board a tender. I sent my little store to my poor forlorn girl, and in twelve hours after set sail to meet the enemies of my country.

" We had not been many days at sea, when we met the enemy ; --'twas hot work, your honour ! Many a stout-hearted seaman perished on that day ; --but we dealt the foe such an example of English bravery, that the victory was ours before sunset. All the time I thought of Peggy, your honour, and just as I was calculating how happy we should be with my share of prize-money, whiz comes a cannon-ball, and lops off one of my timbers as clean as a whistle, your honour. I didn't much care about it, only—I was afraid that Peggy might like me something the worse ;—but I was a lubber for my pains, your honour, and deserved to be keelhauled for my suspicions.

" On our return home we met with a storm ;—such a dreadful hurricane never blew from the heavens :—the sea rose mountains high, and every soul expected to go to the bottom. We hoisted the dead-lights, and fired signals of distress, but they were heard, your honour, no more than a pop-gun. At last the pumps began to choke, and we were obliged to throw our guns overboard ; so some began to tire, and some to despair ; and I began to pray for patience and resignation to the heart of poor Peggy."

I filled him a second goblet of wine, and he proceeded :—

" At break of day, your honour, we found ourselves near the French coast, and separated from our

companions. The ship was almost a wreck ; and, to add to our misfortunes, an enemy's frigate bore down upon us. We were obliged to strike ; so I was hauled ashore, with my shattered limb, and thrown into a prison at Bourdeaux. I wrote to Peggy, but I was a prisoner, and had no token of love to send her.—Indeed she wanted none, for her heart was not to be bought with gold though it might break with sorrow. No matter ! she is in Heaven, your honour ! and little thinks that her poor Griffith, grown old and helpless, is wandering about the world—a beggar."

" Thou art going to a tranquil asylum, my brave fellow," said I.

" Ah, your honour !" cried he, with a movement of his head that implied his doubt of my assertion, " there is no resting-place for sorrow, but in the grave ! Shall I go on with my story, or does it tire your honour ?"

" Proceed," said I.

He went on—

" After fourteen months imprisonment I was exchanged, and sent back to England. I was almost afraid to appear before Peggy without my timber ; for what with one thing and what with another, I cut but a sorry figure, your honour. But my poor girl found no alteration in me, except the want of a leg, and a heart more fond of her than ever. I found her as true as the needle !—and though many a salt wave had washed over my head, she had not forgot me, but by her industry had increased my little store three-fold, your honour. We were soon after married."

Here he stopped abruptly : his cheek displayed a convulsive motion, the effect of his efforts to suppress a tear, which, in spite of his endeavours, fell on the withered hand that rested on his crutch.

He went on—

" We

" We set up a little shop near Wapping, and sold floss, your honour. My messmates loved me, and things went on prosperously. I was as happy, your honour, as the day was long. Peggy used to work at her needle from sun-rise to sun-set, and I considered the day that I lost my timber the luckiest of my life, your honour, for my poor girl always told me she loved me the better for it."

Here he wiped his eyes with the corner of a silk handkerchief that he wore round his neck, and, by his evident emotion, I anticipated the termination of his story.

He continued—

" After four years of comfort, your honour, it pleased the Almighty to take my poor girl from me. She knew that she was going; and as I sat by her bed-side, with a breaking heart, your honour, she looked in my face, and begged me to love and to take care of her babes. I could not speak, but I pressed her cold hand, and she smiled, your honour, just for all the world like a cherubim! So then I begged her to take comfort and to live for my sake; but all would not do—she looked as if she wished to speak—she took my hand and kissed it, and two or three minutes after, with a sigh, she closed her poor dear eyes, and died like a lamb, your honour.

" I was now left alone with my motherless babes; the eldest was a girl three years old, your honour; she could talk, and I used to fancy that her voice was like her mother's; the youngest, a boy, was taken by Peggy's relations, for he was only five weeks old when it pleased God to take from me the comfort of my heart. After I had seen my poor girl laid in the grave, I had little mind to continue in business; but gave myself up to grief, your honour, and had no heart for any thing; so that in three months, by the time that I had paid the doctors for attending my wife, and my creditors were satisfied to the last far-
thing,

thing, I found myself going down in the world, for want of a helpmate; and one summer's day I set out with my little Judy for Pembrokehire:—I was alone in the world, and all places were alike to me, your honour!—But to make short of my story;—I am afraid I intrude upon your honour.”

“Thy story is an interesting one, my good fellow; go on,” said I.

“Your honour is very kind, and God blefs you!” cried old Griffith.—“So I bought a little hut on the sea-shore, and employed myself in making nets for the fishermen that used to come with their smacks round from the Irish coast. They all knew poor Griffith, and they never failed to purchase my work as fast as I could finish it, your honour.

“My little Judy was my only companion; she grew stout and hearty, and by the time she was nine years old, she could cook my dinner and trim up our little cabin; and she used to pick up shell-fish; and—in short we were reconciled to our lot, which is every thing, your honour. But as Fate would have it, just as Judy had passed her thirteenth year, one night, during the equinox, a gallant vessel was wrecked among the rocks within sight of my hovel. A small boat, with the few souls that escaped before she went down, was cast on the beach not a cable's length from my hut; I hastened to their assistance, and, breast-deep in the salt waves, brought a lady ashore upon my shoulders. She was as comely a woman as ever the sun shone upon!

“At first she was afraid of me, for shipwrecked souls sometimes meet with but sorry treatment on the coast, your honour; so she begged me not to use her ill:—but, the Lord blefs your honour,” continued he, laying his hand upon his heart, “I would have suffered death rather than have done her any wrong. She stayed four days in our poor habitation, before she could stir out of my cot:—her companions by turns

turns used to rest in little Judy's hammock. On her departure she offered gold, and many valuable treasures, saved from the wreck, but I would not be paid for doing my duty, your honour. Finding that I refused her favours, she proposed taking my little Judy and making her fortune, and said that she would give her learning like a lady. What could I do, your honour? It was a hard trial - Judy was willing to go with the lady, and I was not such a selfish lubber as to stand in the way of her advancement."

"Poor fellow! it was cruel to take from thee thy only companion," said I.

"Well, your honour, on a fine calm evening, away they went, and I was left in my hovel, on the sandy beach, without a friend in the world to comfort me. My mother had died while I was at sea; and my father, who soon followed her, never acknowledged me, because I deserted my home for Peggy. Often did I lie whole winter nights thinking on my little Judy, and wondering why she never wrote to tell me of her good fortune. Many years passed, and no news came; at last I concluded that she was dead; so I made a sort of tomb on the cliff, near my poor hut, and planted some trees about it, and carved upon it my dear wife's name and that of my poor Judy—and there, your honour, I used to sit and make my fishing-nets, and hear the salt waves dashing against the rocks or rolling on the sands, even to the very threshold of my little hovel."

"And did you never know what became of your daughter?" said I.

"Never, your honour. I used not to see a soul except the fishermen, from year's end to year's end, and only knew how time passed away by the changing of the seasons. Sometimes in the depth of winter, the sea would roar like thunder, and the surges threaten to beat down my poor low hut. But Heaven was bountiful, and spared me."

As he paused, reflection darted across my mind; and I could not help condemning those beings, who, in the full enjoyment of every luxury, complain of Heaven's injustice, and hourly wish for death, while the poor old sailor, neglected by his kindred, forgotten by the world, persecuted by poverty, and tortured by the memory of his long-lost treasures, even amidst the rending sorrows of his heart, with a smile confessed that, 'Heaven was bountiful and spared him !

"And why didst thou quit the wave-beaten hovel?" said I.

"Why, your honour, the sea-breezes and the winter-storms shattered the poor habitation till it was dangerous to live in it. I had not strength to rebuild it—age and infirmity came fast upon me—and one winter morning, not long since, I took it into my head to set out for London. I climbed the cliff to take a last look at my poor Peggy's tomb. The ocean was as bright as silver, your honour; the sun shone as lively as though it had been spring; and the salt waves made the air as fresh as a May morning. I had hardly resolution to depart; but my little roof was nearly fallen in, and the foundation had, only twelve hours before, rocked as the wind howled round it. So, your honour, I carved the name of poor Griffith Blagden on the cliff, and with a heart as heavy as lead, your honour, set out upon my journey."

I found by the conclusion of the old sailor's story, that he was the neglected father of the detestable Mrs. Judith Blagden. My heart, which sympathised in his artless narrative, was roused from the impression it made by indignation, and without waiting to question him farther, I ordered the waiter to take him into another room, and to give him whatever he chose to eat, while I went in search of my truant pupil.—I met him returning to the inn—I told him the
story

story of the old sailor, and he united with me in earnest wishes to mend the veteran's fortune, and to investigate the story of his unnatural daughter.

As soon as the venerable forlorn had made a hearty dinner, Lord Kencarth proposed dispatching his servant with him in a post-chaise for London; with orders to provide him an apartment, and to supply him with every comfort that his age and necessities demanded.

"You shan't accept Greenwich, my buck, dash my jasey!" exclaimed his lordship. "Your old nob shall have a pillow of your own to rest on as long as I have a guinea in my pocket. Quiz my caxon, but you shall live in clover, my old admiral, and forget that there is such a thing as poverty, till you close your peepers, and give us the go-by."

"Your honour, I do not understand you," said the veteran.

"So much the better," replied my pupil; "the greater will be your surprise, my hearty.—Dash my wig, if you shan't dance a hornpipe at my wedding, and square your elbows with the best of em. Dish my sconce, if you shan't have a silver leg, that shall dazzle the day-lights of all the yellow admirals in the dead list of live-stock, my dainty."

"But, your honour, I am old, and only want a day of rest before I end my journey to the grave," said the venerable sailor.

"Dash me, but you shall have many a day of rest, and many a day of jollity too, my old stock-fish. Why, you don't think that I am such a flint-hearted twaddler, but I can honour grey-hairs, and find out an honest soul among a million? Do you know who I am?—Why, dash me, I am Lord Kencarth—Did you never hear of me in your Welsh hovel, my dainty?—Queer my nobility, why I thought every body knew me."

The

The chaise drew up to the door, and my generous pupil, taking the sailor's arm, helped him to mount the step:—"Come, tumble up, my deep one," cried his lordship: "the wind lets fair for a safe port, and you have nothing to do but to keep still between decks.—Dash my jasey, but you're in luck, my jolly! so have a stout heart, and I'll pay the reckoning—till we balance our accounts at doomsday."

The chaise drove on, and I returned with my noble pupil to the parlour.

Lord Kenearth being determined to remain that night with the victorious pugilist, who was in a perilous situation, I retired early to my chamber. The day had been a busy one, and my brain was fatigued with the perpetual changes of sensation that had pervaded every fibre. When I reflected on the long life of solitary anguish which old Griffith had been destined to experience, I shrank at my own restless spirit, which had so frequently betrayed me into impatience, bordering on despair. Weary with thinking, I laid my head upon my pillow; but the tenor of my thoughts, though sleeping, still turned upon the events of the last twelve hours, till I was startled from a feverish dream which presented the following vision.—

Lost on a rock of dreadful height,
And shrouded by the gloom of night,
A weary FAIRIE stood!
No wintry star its feeble ray
Shot forth to point the craggy way,
Or guide his devious steps to shun the foamy flood!

Above, the warring tempest howl'd,
And near the ravenous SHE-WOLF prowl'd,
A cataract plung'd below!
He shrank!—the bleak blast yell'd around,
He totter'd o'er the gulph profound,
While ev'ry shak'd sense was agoniz'd by woe!

For, robb'd of joy, of peace bereft,
 Adversity no balm left,
 To heal the stings of scorn;
 No sigh of love his pain beguill'd.
 On him no friend, no kindred smil'd,
 To draw from memory's wound affliction's rankling thorn!

Disdain'd by fortune, stung by art,
 And tortur'd with a feeling heart,
 Which hope had left to break!
 His sigh was lost amid the blast,
 And fancy, madd'ning on the vast,
 Bade tears, corroding tears, steal down his wither'd cheek.

Then why should he, with haggard eye,
 Start from the she-wolf prowling nigh,
 Or dread the gulph below?
 Why totter o'er the dreadful steep,
 And bear the pelting storm, and weep
 When one short step would end the tyranny of woe?

Poor Felix! why such fears endure,
 When Nature's hand presents a cure,
 Which only death can give?
 Methinks the wretched wand'rer cries——
 "GUILT seeks the grave;—the COWARD dies;
 "While VIRTUE nobly dares to suffer and to LIVE!"

C H A P. XXV.

I FOUND that my slumber was broken by Lord Kencaith, who had entered my chamber to tell me that his pocket had been picked during his absence the preceding evening, and that his loss amounted to a no less sum than four hundred pounds. I instantly rose and dressed myself; a chaise and four was ordered, and three hours before day-break we set out for London. In sixty-nine minutes we reached Hanover-square.—His lordship's town residence was spacious, and every thing about it evinced expence, bordering on prodigality.

As soon as we had done breakfast, we departed on foot for the Police-office, to give information of the rob-

robbery : in our way thither, passing through a narrow street near Piccadilly, we observed a chariot driving with terrible speed before us. The coachman was evidently intoxicated, and the horses, being high-spirited, suddenly turning the corner, overset the carriage on the pavement.

"Dish my sence, but this is a pretty spot of work!" exclaimed Lord Kencarth, darting forward, and seizing the reins, while the horses continued plunging, and the inebriated coachman lay senseless on the footway. I opened the door, and by the only glimmering lamp that remained burning, could just perceive a female reclined in the corner of the carriage. By her making no effort to emancipate herself from her confinement, I concluded that she had fainted, and, with Lord Kencarth's assistance, lifted her from the chariot, and placing her on the step of a street-door, left her to the care of my pupil, while I flew to St. James's-street for a chair. Fortunately I found one, and the lady was placed in it, still totally insensible to all that was passing.

The coachman, being severely wounded on the head and stunned by his fall, my companion undertook to lead him to a surgeon's in the neighbourhood, while I walked before the chairmen to Hanover-square.

The dawn began to break just as we entered the house, and the chair being placed in the hall, I opened the door to release the terrified incognita, when my astonishment was awakened by the sight of Isabella. She was just recovering from her swoon, and, looking at me as though she beheld a spectre, she feebly articulated—"Oh, Heavens! where am I, and how came I hither?"

Rising from her seat with more resolution than strength, she advanced a step forward, and, trembling with apprehension, eagerly snatched hold of the chairman's arm, again exclaiming—"Whither have you

you brought me ? Speak, or I shall expire with terror."

" You are safe, Miss Hanbury," said I ; " and I trust that you will not feel an augmentation of alarm, in knowing that you are under my protection. This house is Lady Kencarth's."

" Then I am safe," cried Isabella, smiling, and recovering from her surprise.

" You would have been equally so, had it been any other," said I, taking her hand, and leading her to the drawing-room ; she looked round her, and viewed every object with an eye of suspicion. At length, making me a formal curtsy, she replied—" I am much indebted to you for your kindness, Mr. Ainsforth ; after what has passed, I really did not expect such an instance of attention.—You will enhance the obligation by ordering a servant to call me another chair, and to attend me to Lady Aubrey's."

The coldness of her manner and the severity of her reproof, took from me the power of utterance—I rung the bell—a servant entered the room—and after some hesitation I obeyed her commands. She smiled, and ceremoniously thanked me.

" Did you say to *Lady Aubrey's*?" cried I with a hesitating voice.

" I did," replied Isabella gravely.

" Astonishing !" exclaimed I. " Forgive me, Miss Hanbury, but I cannot hide the sentiment I feel—the mystery of your whole conduct—"

" The mystery !" repeated Isabella, somewhat piqued ; " now you are indeed taking upon you the authority of a friend."

" Have I no claim to the title ?" said I.

" None !" answered Isabella—" You have forfeited all claims to friendship as well as to confidence."

" How ? tell me, I conjure you."

" By

"By your ingratitude to Colonel Aubrey, and your perfidy to Miss Woodford."

I shrunk and was silent.

"Have you any commands to Lady Aubrey?—She arrived in town only yesterday, and in a few days will return to Glenowen," said Miss Hanbury.

"I have no friends at Glenowen," answered I, throwing myself on a sofa, and almost frantic—"Perish every thing that belongs to it."

"My brother would little thank you, Mr. Ainsforth, if he heard your wish."

"Why, why will you urge me on to madness, and then condemn me because I am a maniac. I respect, I revere your brother, Isabella—but he has, like the rest of the world, abandoned both me and my fortunes."

"Why did you never write to him?" said Isabella earnestly.

"I did write frequently, but my letters were unanswered."

"He never received them," interrupted Miss Hanbury; "and most probably they were intercepted."

"By whom?" said I.

"By Mrs. Blagden—Certain I am, that there has been treachery somewhere," continued Isabella; "for every transaction of your life has been regularly communicated to Lady Aubrey, and by her repeated to my brother. Lady Emily Delvin's letter, informing us of your rash and criminal conduct towards her, and of her lenity in suffering you to escape, was not the least prominent event in the long catalogue of your indiscretions."

"And did you believe me such a villain?"

Isabella turned towards the window, but made no answer.

"Speak, I conjure you," continued I; "acquit me of the charge; for by all that is dear to *honour*—"

"Hold."

"Hold, Mr. Ainsforth! remember Amelia Woodford, and do not profane the word," said Miss Hanbury: "talk not of faith at the very moment that you are an avowed apostate. Reason, gratitude, and humanity plead against you, and charge you with a violation of their laws; while every feeling, every honourable mind, condemns you."

"Miss Woodford was her own destroyer—I was an involuntary seducer; I meant not to betray her; I formed no premeditated plan against her honour; for even on that fatal night, when she fell a victim to my despair—I took her for another."

"For whom did you take her?"

The question struck my brain like electricity. I was convulsed in every joint.—she smiled insultingly. Love, rage, revenge, again assailed my soul. I snatched her to my heart—she shrieked, and at the same moment Lord Kencarth rushed into the drawing-room.

"Oh, my Lord!" exclaimed Isabella, "rescue me from this monster!"

"My Lord, I command your absence," said I; "this lady is my property."

"Indeed, my Lord," said Miss Hanbury, "there is not a syllable of truth in what Mr. Ainsforth utters. I came hither under his protection, and he has insulted me like a ruffian. Let me intreat that you will accompany me to Lady Aubrey's."

"O ho! is it so, my little one?" cried Lord Kencarth, whistling and folding his arms as he fixed his eyes on Isabella. "Dish my jasey, but this is Sir Sidney's mistress! Why you need not have been so squeamish, my dainty; for, dash my wig, if Ainsforth is not as well-looking as your finical Welsh baronet. I like to do a good-natured thing as well as any body; but queer my caxon, if I'll take you to any Sir Sidney in Christendom, unless Ainsforth desires me."

"Do

"Do you know me, my Lord;" said Isabella sternly.

"I know that you are d—d handsome," replied his lordship—"and that's as much as I want to know."

So saying, he caught her hand, and with easy familiarity drew her towards him. She resisted—I began to fear that some new insult would be offered her; for though I had violated the laws of propriety towards her myself, I could not permit another to follow my example.

Lord Kencarth now caught her in his arms, and would have forced a kiss from her—she burst into tears, and turning towards me, exclaimed—"O God! is it Walsingham who refuses to protect me?"

I sprung from the sofa, and tearing her from the arms of my young pupil, conjured her to believe that my conduct and my life were at her disposal.

Lord Kencarth, at a loss to comprehend the meaning of my conduct, gazed on Miss Hanbury for several minutes with silent astonishment—"Quiz my nobility!" exclaimed he, "who *does* she belong to? *She* talks of Lady Aubrey—you say she is your property—and I know she is the mistress of Sir Sidney. Return to Lady Aubrey she *shan't*—stay with you she *won't*—and therefore go with me she *must*. Dish my jasey, if I won't give you a viz and a settlement; and you shall sport a better establishment, have more diamonds - and the finest cattle of any woman in the three kingdoms: and dash my wig, if you *shan't* put all the gallant grandmothers in the circle of St. James's out of countenance, for the first time in their lives, my dainty; and when we have lived together till the town has done talking, why then, queer my connections if I don't marry you."

Miss Hanbury, no longer able to bear Lord Kencarth's language, rung the bell violently; and, rushing out of the room, was hastening towards the street-door,

door, when I flew to overtake her. She darted into the street, and though splendidly dressed, (for she was returning from Lady Amaranth's assembly when the accident happened,) she proceeded on foot across the square. It was not more than seven o'clock; and a robe of silver muslin with a towering plume of white feathers were but ill-adapted to a morning walk in the streets of the metropolis.

C H A P. XXVI.

MISS Hanbury continued to walk hastily, and I to attend her, without either of us uttering a syllable. The stern indignation which was pictured in her countenance, convinced me that every attempt to palliate my conduct would prove fruitless; I therefore consoled myself with the idea that, by accompanying her, I should discover the abode of Lady Aubrey; and I resolved to wait patiently for some future opportunity, when her mind should be more disposed to hear my extenuation. She stopped at a door in Lower Brooke-street, and knocking vehemently, it was presently opened by a servant, whose joy at seeing her was too evident to escape my notice. I bowed, and left her; she entered the house, and I hastened towards Hanover-square to explain the morning's adventure.

I found Lord Kencarth with a thronged levee of personages, as various in the professions as in their outward forms—boxers, jockies, language-masters, gamblers, French dancers, and English tradesmen, thronged his lordship's antichamber, and were waiting for separate audiences—his Swiss valet attending the word of command, as master of the ceremonies.

On entering Lord Kencarth's dressing-room, I found him engaged in giving instructions to the police officer for the recovery of his pocket-book.—“Mind, my hearty, if the vagabond has any family, or you

believe that it is his first offence, you must tip him the blink, and think no more of the matter. I should be sorry to transport a poor knave, dash my jasey ; but if he is one of your deep ones, nab him, my knowing one, and give him a sea-voyage to mend his morality."

" I take you, my Lord ; I vill, you may depend on my behaving handsome, my Lord. I ben't von of your sneakers.—I always acts upon honour, and knows ven I am benefiting the community. But, my Lord, I hope you vill indemnify me in case of accidents—I may get a leaden habeas to the next world, or be turned out of my profession for too much lenity ; and then you know, my Lord—"

" Quiz you for a deep one !" cried Lord Kencarth —" There, you twaddler, there's five guineas for you—so now dish yourself off, and keep your own counsel."

The man of justice vanished, and Monsieur Beauvais next ushered in Mr. Hedge, a gentleman well known on the turf, no less for his successful enterprises than for his invincible courage. Mr. Hedge had fought four duels in England, five on the continent, and had, by indefatigable industry, acquired a fortune sufficiently independent to dub him *comme il faut* in the circles of dissipation, though his first entrance into the world was from the obscurity of an oyster-cellar, and the occupation of his youth was that of an itinerant tinker. As he grew up, Nature bestowed on him a handsome person, and Fortune, jealous of her rival's power, threw him in the way of a buxom widow, who, thinking he would continue to mend, bewitched and married him. She did not long survive the union—and at the end of six months her disconsolate husband formed an alliance with a strolling actress—a lady whose pleasing voice and liberal patronage have since been the theme of public admiration. By this lady's interest with persons of high

high rank, Mr. Hedge obtained a commission in the army, assumed the name of Captain, and divided his hours between the turf and the hazard-table; till intoxicated by the success of his undertakings, and grown into consequence, the cellar, the tinkers' budget, the buxom widow, and the tuneful patroness were entirely forgotten.

Mr. Hedge made my pupil a morning visit to receive a cool five hundred, which he had won the preceding week at Newmarket.—Lord Kencarth, though not present at the race, knew Mr. Hedge to be a man of honour, and the debt was paid by a draft on his banker without a moment's hesitation.

The next visitor ushered into the audience-chamber was Mr. Topas, the jeweller, another personage of infinite honesty.

Mr. Topas advanced with a bow of profound veneration; and taking a small morocco case out of his pocket, thus addressed my pupil—

“Brought your Lordship a *bijou* of infinite beauty—a pink diamond of the first water—belonged formerly to an illustrious but unfortunate female personage—cost three thousand guineas at Vienna—can sell it for half the sum.”

“Quiz me! if I ever saw such a thing as a pink diamond since I opened my peepers!” cried Lord Kencarth. Then taking the case from the jeweller, he continued: “Dish my wig! if it isn't the neat thing, Ainsforth!—Have you any more of the same sort?”

The jeweller replied, “The only one in the kingdom;—the largest in Europe, my Lord: had it only weighed three grains more, it would have been worth any money. By day its lustre is orient and dazzling, but by candle-light its splendour is not to be described! Seven persons of the first rank have sent for me to shew it them. I thought that your lordship might like to have it, and gratitude for past fa-

vours induced me to give your lordship the preference."

"I'll have it, by all that's quizzical," cried his lordship. "Dish me, if it sha'n't put out the peepers of twenty dowagers to-morrow night at the opera."

I shook my head, and whispered, "Take time to reflect:—have the jewel valued."

Mr. Topas again addressed his lordship:—"My Lord, you will never meet with such a magnificent gem during your lordship's life:—it is fit to adorn the hand of a prince. Shall I leave it? Suffer me to put your lordship's name on my books for fifteen hundred—a mere trifle, when the transcendent beauty of the jewel is considered. Mrs. Begum has sent to look at it, but I thought it my duty first to wait upon your lordship."

"O! dash my wig if I don't have it," cried my pupil.

Again I ventured to check his arm, and to whisper—"Beware."

"Can't I keep it a day or two to consider of it?" said his lordship."

"Why my Lord,"—replied Mr. Topas, hesitating as if to form an excuse, "I have promised to shew it to several persons of fashion this morning; and, to tell your lordship the truth, a foreigner of distinction is in treaty for it, to embellish the crown of the Empress of Russia:—a day's neglect may prevent my disposing of it to infinite advantage; and I am sure that your lordship would not wish me to sustain any loss by obliging you."

"Mayn't I shew it to a jewel-grinder? Dash my jasey, if I am any judge of diamonds," said Lord Kencarth.

I nodded my approbation of the proposal.

"Why, my Lord, I have pledged my word of honour to the owner of the jewel, who is a person of very considerable rank, an emigré of distinction, not

to

to expose the diamond to any of the trade :—the value would be considerably diminished by its being hawked about, and the article is so uncommonly beautiful, that I am sure of a purchaser if your lordship does not like it. I have no motive, my Lord, but to oblige your lordship, as a person of taste, and one of my best customers.”

Mr. Topas was replacing the jewel in its case, with all imaginable *sang froid*, when Lord Kencarth desired once more to look at it.

“ Dish me, if it isn’t the neat thing, Ainsforth ! I should like to have it, because nobody else has got such a one,” cried my pupil.

“ Fifteen hundred guineas might be better employed,” said I.

“ I do not wish to be paid,” said Mr. Topas, bowing obsequiously. “ The honour of his lordship’s name upon my books is quite sufficient : I shall wait my Lord’s own time : we have some little account now standing—a mere trifle—about seven thousand.”

“ Dish my nobility, how do you make that out ? It was only two thousand but three months ago,” said my pupil. “ Why, you’re going your lengths, my deep one.”

“ Your lordship shall hear the items : I have a memorandum in my pocket-book, which I made when I took the orders,” said Mr. Topas, taking out a large *porte-feuille* and reading.

“ Six pair of new-invented spring shoe-buckles—seven gold watch-chains—a brilliant *fausse-montre* for Lady All-trap—a ditto set of fan-sticks for the Duchess of Riversford—a diamond opera-glass for Kitty Bronze—your lordship’s hair, set with large pearls, for Miss Amoret ; and an ivory pin-case for your lordship’s mother. Your lordship will be pleased to recollect, that you also ordered a dozen diamond hoop-rings to make presents, and a *ceinture* of rubies for Lord Faircourt’s mistress the pretty actress :—be-

sides some gold toys for Mrs. Winkwell's daughter, and an emerald Shamrock for Mrs. O'Liffy."

"Queer my sconce! if it is not all as right as my eye; but I must have the pink diamond notwithstanding; it will always sell for the money," cried my pupil.

Again I conjured him to reflect.

"Sell, my Lord!--why any jeweller in Europe will give you the sum you pay for it, after you have worn it a whole winter, my Lord," said Mr. Topas. "Besides, your lordship should recollect, that diamonds were never at so low a price as at this juncture. The unfortunate nobility of France have overstocked the markets, and jewels of every denomination are become a mere drug, my Lord. Had not this been the case, your lordship would not have purchased this superb *bijou* for less than three thousand. Think of the difference, my Lord: in less than a twelvemonth it will be worth its original price. Take it to the side-light, my Lord; it has all the vivid and transcendent colours of the rainbow, with the lucid lustre of the whitest brilliant! Nothing can be more orientally superb! It would embellish the cabinet of the Grand Sultan, as it once did the most beautiful hand in the universe! Suffer me to leave it:--permit me to inform the nobility that your lordship is the purchaser. There is not its equal in Europe:--your lordship will have it then?--Thank you, my Lord--much obliged to your lordship--"

Lord Kencarth placed the gem upon his finger, and was moving it with dazzling velocity, when he exclaimed,—"Quiz my nobility, but I must have it! Mind, Topas, I sha'n't pay you these three months.

"Three years, my Lord,—and I shall be honoured by your kindness," replied the obliging Mr. Topas.—"Thank you, my Lord. I must go and make my excuses to Mrs. Begum, and the long list of nobility who are now waiting to see the diamond. I intreat
your

your lordship not to mention the sum you gave for it : I sent a refusal of an hundred more only yesterday, to a particular friend, but your lordship's exquisite taste does honour to your tradesmen ; - and whatever you wear, my Lord, cannot fail to become the fashion. Hope your lordship will not trust the *bijou* out of your hands, or suffer it to be played tricks with by any of the trade.—Thank your lordship—your lordship's most obedient."

Mr. Topas withdrew, and Monsieur Volage, the French opera-dancer, entered the dressing-room.

" Milor," cried the undaunted Volage, " I come to beg your lordship's protection a mon benefice, samedi prochaine a l'opera :—ven I shall give un grand ballet, de most superb and magnifique dat vas ever give in dis country ! Toute la noblesse ma promis to come : mais—l'opera vill be noting vidcut de presence of Milor Kencat."

" What does he say, Ainsforth ?" inquired my pupil—" Dish my wig, if ever I heard such gibberish."

" No understand dish vig," cried Volage. " Je suis tres fache if I have offend milor—mais I have dispose of tree thousand ticket pour mon benefice, von guinea chacun : and I pray milor to take von demi douzaine aussi."

" Well, that will do," cried my pupil—" give your tongue a holiday ; leave your damme dozen—and go it—budge—be moving."

" No understand !" muttered Monsieur Volage, with his shoulders raised somewhat above his ears, and his countenance ridiculously expressive of astonishment.

" Budge—take yourself off—dash my jasey, but you can hop fast enough at the crotchet shop."

" Jasee ! hop ! --que veut dire, milor ? je n'comprend pas un mot—j'espere que monseigneur vil honneur mon benefice vid his presence," cried Volage.

" Why, I tell you, I'll come. So now stop your

gab—and put your pins in motion,” said Lord Kencarth.

“ No understand !” cried the dancer.

“ You may depend on his lordship’s patronage,” said I ; “ but he is at present particularly engaged, and wishes you to leave him.”

“ No understand.”

“ Quiz my caxon ! here’s a rouleau for your damme dozen,” said my pupil. “ Now what say you ?”

“ Ah ! je comprend bien !” cried the delighted Monsieur Volage, making fifty bows and retiring ; when my pupil seizing him by the arm, exclaimed, “ Dish my sconce, mounseer, did you ever see a pink diamond ? Now, my dainty !—fast your peepers ; here’s an affair—cost me fifteen hundred guineas not ten minutes ago : there isn’t such another in the kingdom—dash my wig if there is.”

“ Cette une tres joli *bijou* ! mais pardonnez moi, monseigneur—it is not brilliant,” cried Monsieur Volage.

“ That’s a good one. Dash my jasey ! what a rum judge you must be, not to know a *bijou* from a brilliant.”

“ En verité, milor, it is not diamant,” cried Monsieur Volage.

“ Will you pretend to know better than Mr. Topas the jeweller ?” said Lord Kencarth. “ Dash my wig, if you Frenchmen don’t think to teach the whole universe : but I know that a diamond is a diamond, and queer my caxon if I won’t stand to it, if all the world said to the contrary. So, Mounseer Volage, you may be jogging,—and cut your capers for those that will believe you. Not a diamond !—Dash my jasey, if I would sell it for half my estate—let the other be where it will. Here, Beauvais, shew out Volage,—and shew in somebody else.”

The

The next person who presented himself was Mr. Pannel the coachmaker.

"I waited on your lordship with a drawing of a new carriage—quite in style, my Lord—very elegant—light as a feather, and totally unlike any thing that was ever seen before. Your lordship cannot fail to patronize it. I have not shewn the design to any body, till I consulted your lordship's taste," said Mr. Pannel.

"What is it like? Is it the neat thing? Will it beat my tandem? Answer me that, my dainty," cried my pupil.

"My Lord, it is the most perfect thing of the kind that ever was invented! An infant may draw it, It will follow a pair of horses twelve miles an hour with all the ease imaginable. Only observe the construction of the springs, my Lord;—the lightness of the body;—the elegance of the whole carriage. I have not shewn it to a single person, my Lord, for I thought your lordship would like to have the first."

"What do you call it?" said my pupil.

"Why, my Lord—if your lordship will patronize the invention, I shall request your lordship's permission to call it—a *Kencarth*."

"O! dash my jasey, but I'll have one!" exclaimed his lordship. "When can you put it in hand?—how long will it be making?—what will it cost? Dish me, but I gave you two hundred for a phaeton last month, and I have never used it but once;—you must take it back;—what will you allow me for it?"

Mr. Pannel demurred—

"Fashions change every day, my Lord," said he, pausing:—"Phaetons are going out;—had it been a curriole, I might have found a purchaser;—but, to accommodate your lordship, will allow you—fifty guineas, and I shall then be a loser."

"What say you, Ainsforth!" cried my pupil,

"shall I sport a Kencarth, and swap my Highflyer for fifty?—Queer my caxon, but it will be the knowing thing to have a carriage of one's own name."

"If your lordship will take my advice, it will be to relinquish the idea," said I. "The drawing seems to promise neither elegance nor utility; it will be an expensive bauble, and you will never use it."

"His lordship's name will give it fashion," said Mr. Pannel.

"You are right, my dainty," cried my pupil; "and dish me, but I'll have one; if only to drive Lady Alltrap about the streets in."

"Indeed, it will be ridiculously singular," said I.

"That's the very reason why I am determined to have it," replied Lord Kencarth. "But heark'ye, my neat Pannel, how do I stand upon your books?—tell me that."

"Something above four thousand, my Lord; including Lady Alltrap's landau:—a mere trifle."

"Well! do you want to be paid? tell me that, my trusty?—I can't give you any money this winter; I must deal all upon tick. I have a little outrun the constable; but shall pick up again next spring."

Mr. Pannel looked blue.

"What say you?" cried my pupil, "tick, and no touch—is that the order of the day, my deep-one?"

"Your lordship's credit with me is unbounded," said Mr. Pannel bowing. "The *Kencarth* shall be ready in six weeks."

"But you will allow his lordship more than fifty guineas for his phaeton?" said I.

Mr. Pannel again hesitated, and Lord Kencarth whispered, "D—me, don't bore upon the subject, lest he should dun me."

Mr. Pannel took his leave, and I left my pupil to receive the rest of his morning visitors, while I stroll-
ed

ed towards Lady Aubrey's to inquire after the health of Isabella.

I had not proceeded more than half across the square, when Lord Kencarth's valet-de-chambre, Beauvais, ran after me, and requested that, if I was going to call upon the lady whom I had brought with me in the morning, I would take charge of a medallion which she had left upon the sofa. I examined the trinket; it was encircled with large diamonds, with hair curiously woven, and the letters S. A. in a cypher on the centre. There remained not a doubt in my own mind, but that the hair and initials were Sir Sidney's; the medallion a present from him to Isabella. The sensation which pressed upon my heart was a painful one, and with more than ordinary agitation, I hastened to Lady Aubrey's to restore the precious pledge of love to the sordid object of my too tender attachment, and to bid her, and her detested lover, adieu for ever!

C H A P. XXVII.

I KNOCKED at Lady Aubrey's door, and on giving my name to the servant, he informed me that he had her ladyship's orders to say, she never should be at home to Mr Ainsforth. I inquired after Miss Hanbury's health, and was answered that she was not yet awake. I left my card for the latter, and my contempt for the former, and was returning home, when, at the end of Brooke-street, I met Sir Sidney.

He hastened towards me, and with a countenance pleased and ingenuous, expressed his joy at once more finding me. "I had rather meet you on terms of friendship in Brooke-street, believe me," said he, "than armed against your life in Hyde Park."

I recol-

I recollected my last interview with Sir Sidney, and my heart shuddered. He pressed me to return with him. "You must make your peace with my mother," said he; "and, if possible, supplant her new favourite."

"Has Lady Aubrey feeling enough to shew kindness to any thing?" said I smiling.

"The nephew of Mrs. Blagden is now her chief counsellor," cried Sir Sidney; "young Edward Blagden. Indeed so great a favourite is this new *protégée*, that I have some apprehension she means to marry him."

"Is he worthy of her choice?" said I.

"He is young and well-looking," replied Sir Sidney; "just such a fellow as would captivate a woman's heart before she took the trouble to consult her understanding. But you must return with me, and judge from observation, whether you think either his external graces, or his mental qualities, such as entitle him to Lady Aubrey's favour."

I now informed Sir Sidney of the message which my aunt had left with her servant:—he started. "You know where she resides then?" said he, with evident emotion. "Have you met my mother since her return to town?"

"I have not met Lady Aubrey," was my answer.

"Perhaps," continued Sir Sidney, growing red, and hesitating, "you have seen—Isabella?"

"Even so."

"Lately?" cried my cousin, with increased agitation.

"Last night——or rather this morning."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Sir Sidney. "Can woman be so treacherous?——You must have been mistaken——it could not be Isabella. I left her

at

at Lady Amaranth's; she complained that the heat of a crowded room overcame her: I went home to order my carriage; and, on my return, found that she had taken Mrs. O' Liffy's chariot and quitted the assembly. Since that moment I have never seen her: it was day-light when I returned to my mother's house, and I concluded that Isabella was sleeping."

"She was not sleeping at seven this morning," said I."

Sir Sidney's colour changed from red to the paleness of a corpse. "You were certainly mistaken," cried he; "how was she dressed?—Give me some proof that you saw her. This is a serious business, Walsingham; and my peace of mind is not to be trifled with."

"She wore a robe of silver muslin," said I; "her head was adorned with a plume of white feathers."

Sir Sidney reeled against a shop window, and taking my hand, faintly articulated—"Since your better genius has prevailed, I can only wish you happy, and bid you farewell for ever. I hoped, Walsingham, that time, and my regard for Isabella, would have alienated your affections, and secured her friendship; as it is, Heaven bless you!"

His manner was mournfully impressive; his cheek and lip were as white as marble. I stood like a statue, without power to answer him: he walked slowly along the pavement towards Bond-street.

Thinking that I had carried the jest beyond the bounds of humanity, I followed my cousin till he reached Pall Mall. He stopped at the Cocoa-tree, and desired a waiter to order a post-chaise and four to be got ready as speedily as possible. He did not observe me, though I stood not ten paces from him. Having dispatched the messenger, he entered the house. I paused a moment to consider what step was most advisable to take, when a thought darted
across

across my brain that, probably, he meditated suicide. I entered the coffee-room;—he was not there. I inquired of the waiter where he was, and he informed me that Sir Sidney had called for pen, ink, and paper, and was shewn into a private drawing-room. “Tell him that Mr. Ainsforth wishes to see him,” said I.

The waiter flew to deliver my message, and I thought every moment an age till he brought back the answer, which was, that “Sir Sidney Aubrey, being particularly engaged, could not then see me.”

Determined not to take a refusal, I desired the waiter to shew me the room where Sir Sidney was, and he instantly obeying, I entered without ceremony. My cousin rose abruptly from his seat, and hastily exclaimed—“By Heaven, Walsingham, this persecution is insupportable!—Is there no spot upon the habitable globe where I can hope for rest?—What do you wish? Are you determined to destroy me? Will nothing less than my destruction satisfy your revenge?—Oh, God!” continued Sir Sidney, “a few weeks, a few short weeks, would have elucidated every mystery!—But Fate has interposed, and I resign myself to wretchedness.”

“Then, at last, you experience a small portion of the anguish which, for months, you have made me suffer,” said I. “But, to convince you that I am less obstinate in malice than you have been in persecution, I will confess, that——”

“What?” cried Sir Sidney eagerly. “Speak!—my brain is burning with the fever of despair. Oh, Walsingham! ungenerous Walsingham! what a deceitful fiend is Isabella!—Only three days since she avowed her passion for another, and now, to torture me, she makes you the dupe of her deception.”

“Whom did she avow to love?” said I earnestly.

Sir

Sir Sidney smiled. "It is of little importance," answered he; "the triumph is yours, and the humiliation will follow as certain as that the night succeeds the day. I shall not live to see it—thank Heaven I shall not."

"I conjure you, tell me to whom Isabella has transferred her affections?" said I.

"I do not comprehend the term," replied my cousin. "Affections cannot be transferred that never yet were fixed."

"Then Isabella is doubly criminal," interrupted I; "for the woman who bestows her person, where she can withhold her heart, is the most culpable of beings: the venal wanton is not more guilty.—But this is trifling.—You, who were the seducer of Isabella, should be the last to calumniate her name. From you she is entitled to protection; and that slander, which fails to depreciate her merit, stigmatizes you as the most infamous of mortals."

Sir Sidney walked hastily about the room, gnawing his lip, and looking like a maniac. I continued:—

"From this hour, Sir Sidney, we must part for ever;—I was born to hate you. From the early days of infancy, your very name has been the bane of my repose; in every path of still retirement, your malice crossed me. I flew to the busy scenes of life; thither you traced my footsteps. The solitudes of mountains, and the crowds of cities, have been explored in vain; your persecuting spirit still pursued its victim, and my native country can afford no shelter from the tyranny of your malevolence:—I shall therefore fly. In a few days I shall depart for the Continent."

Sir Sidney threw himself into a chair, and fixing his eyes in wildness on the ground, made no answer. I proceeded:—

"Fortune

"Fortune has placed you on an eminence which enables you to look down on persecuted individuals——"

"Oh! curse my fortune!" interrupted Sir Sidney. "Take, take it, Walsingham: I shall not want it long!—You will remember me with regret, your heart will ache with compunction, when I shall be in the grave, and tranquil. But whatever your inhuman malice may suggest—whether to evince your triumph, or to stigmatize my memory—I charge you, if honour is yet dear to man, or pity due to a weak, foolish, erring woman, guard, oh! guard, and respect the misguided Isabella."

"She shall have my pity," answered I; "and, unquestionably, the world will allow her all the respect which is due to the mistress of Sir Sidney Aubrey."

"She never was my mistress. By all my hopes of happiness beyond the grave, I swear that Isabella *never* was my mistress," replied Sir Sidney. "Time will develop the dark mystery; for the fates alone can unravel that clue which will lead the angel, Pity, to the grave of the ill-fated Sidney."

He burst into tears, and wept like a woman: every drop he shed augmented my jealousy, and strengthened my determination to punish Isabella. After a pause of several minutes I approached my cousin, and drawing the medallion from my pocket, presented it to him.

C H A P. XXVIII.

SIR SIDNEY snatched the medallion from my hand, dashed it on the floor;—and rising abruptly, darted out of the room. The glass which covered the initials was shattered into a thousand pieces;—the cypher broken, and several of the brilliants upset by the violence with which they struck the ground.

This

This unlucky event involved me in a new dilemma. I could not return the medallion to Miss Hanbury, so defaced ; and to keep it would be unpardonable. There was no way of accounting for the accident, but by telling the truth ;— and even that would subject me not only to her contempt, but her reproaches. After a pause of some minutes, which I devoted to reflection, I determined to wait on Isabella, to restore the medallion, and to confess every circumstance of the transaction.

I immediately set out for Brooke-street, and on the door being opened, the first person I saw was Mrs. Blagden. The grim visage of a fury would have been personified meekness, in comparison with the features of my ancient antagonist. I requested to speak with Miss Hanbury. Mrs. Blagden informed me that there was no such person in the house. I entered the parlour, and Mrs. Blagden followed. “ What do you want ?” said she peevishly. “ My lady has long since determined never to see you more, therefore you only lose your time in pestering her ladyship. Besides, I wonder at your assurance to enter these doors while I am here :— you ought to recollect how you always behaved to me, and how basely you attempted to murder Sir Sidney.”

“ I wish to see Miss Hanbury,” said I.

“ Miss Hanbury is no company for you, I tell you once more,” cried the harpy Blagden. “ There is not a lord in the land, who would not be proud to marry my lady and Miss Hanbury too. Indeed, if I don’t mistake, my lady will not be a widow long. I am sure I shall advise her to take a husband, if only to get rid of her beggarly relations.”

“ Can I see Miss Hanbury ?” repeated I.

Mrs. Blagden paid no regard to my question, but throwing herself into a chair, continued :—

“ My lady has found a person at last, thank God !
who

who will know how to value her kindness.—A young man, and as handsome a one too as ever wore a head;—and not a vagrant neither; for he shall have all my savings, and I can give him a few thousands, though you have been pleased to turn up your nose at me. All my life have I been toiling and slaving like a negro, and got no thanks neither. But my lady has at last found out who are her friends, and who are her foes;—and my nephew, Edward Blagden, will do honour to her ladyship's taste, — and reward me for all the ill usage I have met with."

"Can I speak with Miss Hanbury?" said I.

"And as for Sir Sidney, I don't care a pin," cried Mrs. Blagden, with a malicious sneer. "He is no better than he should be;—but it will all come out;—my nephew Edward will set things to rights, I'll warrant you. He won't be put upon, as I have been. And as for you, and your good-for-nothing tutor Mr. Hanbury, my nephew Edward shall give you both a sound drubbing, if you play off any more of your tricks upon me or my lady. I know what you have been at;—I heard of your killing the poor woman, and robbing the lady;—and for half a farthing I would tell all the world how you attempted to break open my lady's cabinet, and to shoot Sir Sidney."

I smiled.

"You may shew your teeth, and outface it, Mister Impudence," continued Mrs. Blagden; "but time will bring all things to light, and you will then laugh the wrong side of your mouth, Mister Brazen-face:—and if you don't make the best of your way out of my lady's house, I shall send for a constable, and shew you who is mistress here, Mister Vagabond."

"When you have wearied that brawling tongue of yours, I will beg you to take a message for me to Miss Hanbury," said I.

Mrs.

Mrs. Blagden bounded from her seat, and advancing towards me, like a she-dragon, vociferated—

“ *I carry a message !—I be your lacquey !—I wonder at your insolence. I wish my nephew was here to give you your deserts, you frightful ugly jackanapes !—But I sha’n’t stand here wasting my breath ;—I shall make you know that I am my lady’s best friend, and the mistress of this house, at least.*” So saying, she rung the bell violently. A servant entered. “ *Here, Andrew,*” cried she, “ *turn this fellow out of doors. You had orders never to admit him, and I wonder at you for disobeying my lady’s commands.*”

“ *My honest friend,*” said I, perceiving the embarrassment which Mrs. Blagden’s extraordinary request occasioned, “ *you need not trouble yourself, nor offend me. I am little inclined to bear an insult : my mind is not easily quieted when I am once roused to exert it. I only wish to speak five words with Miss Hanbury ;—will you convey my message to her ?*”

“ *At your peril !—at your peril, I say !*” vociferated Mrs. Blagden.

“ *You need na be sae clamorous ; I sha’na take part with either, till I ken baith sides o’th’ business,*” replied Andrew, taking out his leathern snuff-box, and viewing me attentively.

“ *Turn him out !*” vociferated Mrs. Blagden.

“ *I shall do na sic thing,*” cried the honest North-Briton. “ *The lad’s a braw lad, an I wad be laith to do an ill turn by sic a faire spaken gentleman. An a’ were a saucy loon, like some that I ken i’th’ world, I canna say how fare the blude o’th’ Mac-Gregors—*”

“ *Will you obey my orders, or will you not, you idle gossiping old blockhead ?*” cried Mrs. Blagden.

“ *You*

" You need na be sae haasty ! " cried Andrew ; " I say nathing but gude sense and gude discrection. The lad's a bonie lad !---an I were sure to be made the first of my ancestors, I would na be sic a cauld-hearted loon as to meddle with a hair o' his hede. I wad be laith to disgrace my famey, by forgetting what is due to humanity."

" Will you dare disobey my commands, you drawling old driveller ? " cried Mrs. Blagden. " I shall tell my lady how you behave yourself ; and this house shall no longer harbour people who will not do their duty."

" Gude troth, an you come to that, 'tis na I that am to blame i'th' matter," replied old Andrew. " I canna bring mysel to shame, an take up the trade of a cauld-bluded loon, for any Zantippe i'th' lond. An you want a graceless lubber you munna take a Mac-Gregor,---I can tell you that."

" O ! you faucy mountaineer ! you oatmeal vagabond ! " exclaimed Mrs. Blagden. " Go back to your land of thistles, you impudent variet you !"

" Gang your ways, for a crabbed auld cat-a-murrain ! " cried the indignant Andrew. " Why you munna think to flout a North Breton ; and yet haud your hede as high as your betters. By my sol, an I'd as soon lead the de'il a daunce as far as John o' Groats, as fallow the whemfies of sic an auld beadlamite ! Gude troth, I'll e'en jog bock to the Highlands,---and the de'il tack the whole pack o'ye all together : for sic a fet never turned the hede of a Scot since the gude days o' St. Andrew !"

" You'll give me a good character, I warrant you ! " cried Mrs. Blagden.

" I canna gi you any thing you're mair in want of : and e faith I winna stint you o'that," replied Andrew.

" Can I speak with Miss Hanbury ? " said I.

" In

"In gude faith an you can, if you han'na lost the use o' your tongue," answered Andrew. "Mistress Isabelle is na fi cauld-hearted as this auld scaremouch, saving your presence. I should be laith to turn my bock upon a weel-spoken lassie; though would gang as fare as the Antee-podes to get quit o' sic an auld hagar!—But I winna disgrace my speech;—for it is na for the honour o' my famely to throw dirt with a cheeld o'th' deevil!"

"Can I see Miss Stanbury?" cried I, somewhat impatiently.

"That depends o'the gudenefs o' your sight, mon," replied Andrew: "In troth, an you winna set your eyn on sic a bonie lassie for many a long day, unless you tack a journey to the highlands."

I now wrote my name on a scrap of paper, and delivered it to the honest-hearted Andrew, who instantly quitted the parlour, and left me with Mrs. Blagden.

Again a volley of invective flowed from the never-tiring tongue of my ancient assailant; and the philosophic scorn from which I determined not to deviate, rather increased than suppressed the torrent of her resentment. Seated opposite to my furious and inexorable enemy, I fixed my gaze upon her without uttering a syllable, while with rage nearly approaching to frenzy, she renewed the wordy combat, and exclaimed, as her cheek grew pale and her eyes seemed to flash the fires of indignation, "You audacious fellow you—how dare you set foot within my lady's doors? But this house will soon have a master, thank my stars! one that will not suffer either I or my lady to be insulted and put upon by any beggar's brat in the universe. You are just like your mother, she was as impudent as a highwayman's horse, and as ugly too—and when your father preferred her to me, and married a beggarly dependant of my old lady's, all the world cried Shame! so they did—for there

was

was not a better looking woman within a hundred miles of Glenowen than I was, and that the whole universe can testify.—But the chaplain, forsooth, looked over my head, when other folks came to take place of their betters—and all the world said that he deserved to have his gown stripped off his shoulders for his pains, an impudent, ungrateful vagabond !”

“ Rail on,” said I ; the dead cannot hear, and the living despise thy malice.”

“ Despise !” vociferated Mrs. Blagden—“ Despise yourself, or mend your manners. My nephew Edward is your master, I can promise you—He has a handsome, genteel, noble presence, like a prince—and ten good thousand pounds in his pocket, my honest savings. Shew me your rent-roll, Mister Mumper ; tell me where your fortune is to come from ; you shan’t have a pin’s point of my lady’s property. I would out with all I know, if it ruined her and myself into the bargain, rather than see you master of a stick belonging to Glenowen.”

“ Thank you, amiable lady !” said I, rising and making a low bow.—She continued—

“ My lady minds nobody but me.—I can make her do any thing ; and before I am a month older she shall marry my nephew Edward Blagden, or I am not living. You may take your leave of the family—your triumph is nearly expired you may look for new friends to make fools of ; Mr. Hanbury has done with you—I took care to settle that business.

Miss Hanbury’s suspicions concerning my letters were confirmed by this unguarded confession of Mrs. Blagden’s, and I could not refrain from exclaiming, “ Infamous harpy !” At this moment Andrew returned.

“ Gude troth, lad,” said he with a sorrowful countenance, “ the lassie winna gi ye audience ; she
canna

canna think o' hauding converse wi a person that is na friend o' my lady's. But she bade me tell you that she has na ill blude towards you, and that she wishes you mickle good wherever you wander. I'faith, an I were i'the Highlands you should na want for a hame to put your hede in, though this auld harradan has given you such a deevil of a dressing. Oh! an you cou'd haundle the bagpipes, like some braw lairds that I ken o'the other side the Tweed, you need na be dangling after this lassie and t'other; an the world wou'd follow ye, and auld Andrew into the bargain."

"Will you inform Miss Hanbury that I bring intelligence from Sir Sidney Aubrey?" said I.

"Gude faith will I; an I warrant she winna haud out much longer," replied old Andrew. "I should be laith to make her angry wi me; but since you come fra Sir Sidney, i'll e'en venture. An now I cau it to mind, I think it was you, lad, that brought the lassie safe hame this morning."

"Brought the lady safe home this morning!" repeated Mrs. Blagden, with wide-stretched eyes of wonder and suspicion. "Pretty doings! out all night nobody knows where, and brought home at seven in the morning by nobody knows whom. Fine conduct, truly! But my lady shall know it—all the world shall know it; and that canting, preaching, sneering vagabond, Walter Hanbury, shall hear what a prudent sister he has got - and Sir Sidney shall be told what a fine friend he has chosen to keep company with;—and you, old Mister Pimp, you sat up to open the door, forsooth!"

"Maister Pemp!—Gad's blude, you faucy auld deevil you.—The murrain tak your assurance. If there is a pemp i'the family, 'tis na Andrew Mac-Gregor. Look to your aine beggar's bairne, and do na cau names, lest you bring an auld hoofe about your ears,"

ears," cried the honest Scot, while his face became scarlet with the indignation of insulted honour.

" I know nothing about beggars and barns," replied Mrs. Blagden.

" Nane so deaf as those that winna hear !" added Andrew : " but sin you tak upon you to caw names, and to affront the honour o' my famely, I shanna put up wi your impudence any longer ; the de'il a bit do I care for the whole clan of you, though you were as auncient as the flude. An sin you make me speak, I'll tell au I ken o'the matter."

" Scandalize my lady if you dare, you faucy varlet," cried Mrs. Blagden.

" Wha let the lad wi the de'il's name into the hoose, when au the famely were sleeping, Mestrefs Jeezebel ? Wha promised to make a laird o' a loon, that is na fit to clean the shoes of a Mac-Gregor ? And wha said that Sir Sidney was na maire my lady's son than a was his majesty's ?"

" O you villain ! you scurrilous old mischief-maker ! I never uttered such a word," exclaimed Mrs. Blagden.

" By my sol, but you did ; an you told your cousin-jarman, Maister Edward, the same story. You canna stop my tongue, sin you have attacked my honour, and sin you tak upon you to govern the famely ; I winna stint you of gude counsel ; it costs me naithing, an your kindly welcome."

Andrew now quitted the room once more, to convey my message, and I waited impatiently for Isabella's answer. He returned, and brought me word that Miss Hanbury would see me in half an hour.

I was ushered into the drawing-room. Pens, ink, and paper lay on the table, and to beguile the tedious moments, I scribbled the following little

M A D R I G A L.

Oh ! sad and watchful waits thy lover,
 Whose fate depends upon a smile,
 Who counts the weary minutes over,
 And chides his flutt'ring heart the while.
 Who, as the zephyrs, softly blowing,
 From drooping flow'rets shake the dew,
 While down his cheek the tear is flowing,
 Sweet rose of beauty ! sighs for you,

Oh ! proud and madd'ning is the pleasure,
 When to my eyes thy form appears ;
 All drest in Nature's winning treasure
 Of blushing hopes and grateful fears.
 And while our bosoms wildly beating,
 A thousand nameless raptures prove ;
 Our eyes in speechless transport meeting,
 Shall love to gaze, and gaze to love !

Then, Rose of beauty, haste and cheer me,
 With lips like rubies come, and smile ;
 Ah ! trust my faith, and do not fear me,
 I love too fondly to beguile !
 The false and cunning may allure thee,
 And win thee only to betray ;
 I would not, lady, so secure thee,
 Nor wear thy favours for a day.

Then come and bless me, Nature's treasure !
 Oh ! come, and bid my sorrows fly ;
 Instruct my heart to throb with pleasure,
 Or bid me cease to hope, and die !
 And, Rose of beauty, since thy lover
 For thee a thousand lives would give,
 One grateful thought at least discover,
 One tender sigh to bid him live !

C H A P. XXIX.

AS I finished the last stanza, Isabella entered the room. There was a cast of tender melancholy in her countenance that touched my heart ; her eyes were still humid with tears, and every feature bore evident signs of more than ordinary sorrow. “ Wal-

Walsingham," said she, with a mild and impressive tone, "you will be surprised when I inform you of the change which is about to take place in Lady Aubrey's family:—your aunt, in a few days, will be the wife of Edward Blagden. By the artifice of your ancient enemy, Sir Sidney is estranged from the bosom of his mother, and the long-buried mystery of his birth must at last be unravelled."

"You awaken my curiosity;—for Heaven's sake be explicit," said I.

"Alas, Walsingham! I dare not," replied Isabella. "I am sworn to secrecy; my aching heart throbs while I recollect the awful vow which I can never break: but that detested fiend, Mrs. Blagden, will shortly elucidate the whole business. Jealous of Lady Aubrey's kindness to me, and anxious to promote her nephew's interest, by a marriage with her too credulous mistress, the secret, which has been held inviolate since the birth of Sir Sidney, cannot fail to transpire. Poor Sidney!—the most amiable, the most generous of mortals."

"She burst into an agony of tears, and for several minutes was incapable of speaking."

"Who is Sir Sidney?—Is he not the child of Lady Aubrey? the heir of Sir Edward?" said I.

"The ill-fated Sidney is the child of Lady Aubrey," replied Miss Hanbury. "But, with the prospect of humiliation which now presents itself, it would have been better he had never known that title; his days have been a scene of sorrow, and, I fear, his last sad hour will close in anguish."

Again she wept abundantly.

"Was not Sir Edward the father of Sir Sidney?" inquired I earnestly.

"He was; and had he lived, your cousin had been happy."

"You distract me with a thousand doubts and apprehensions," said I. "Why should Lady Aubrey's

brey's marriage confirm my cousin's misery? Does his every hope of happiness depend on her?"

"Oh no," replied Miss Hanbury. "There lives another being who will command the fate of Sidney Aubrey."

"A woman?"

"No — a man; the most deserving, the most enlightened of men," answered Isabella.

"Merciful God! you cannot mean your brother?" said I.

Miss Hanbury shook her head, and sighed; but made no answer.

"I have something to communicate respecting Sir Sidney," said I, "and yet I know not how to tell you——that——"

Isabella rested on my shoulder, and trembled in every limb.

"Have a care," said she; "my heart is already overpowered with pity. I have too long watched the progress of your cousin's sorrows not to tremble at the idea of their accumulation; he has been the slave of his mother's false ambition. Heaven forbid that I should ever live to say——the victim!——He knows not that a storm is gathering round him which will bend his generous bosom to the grave."

"I have seen Sir Sidney," said I.

"When?"

"This morning——not two hours since."

Isabella scarcely breathed.

"Happy, happy Sidney! to be so adored," said I. "All the ills of life, all the vicissitudes of fortune, will pass lightly over a bosom which has such sweet participation."

"Walsingham!" interrupted Isabella, "yet have a little patience; it is not on me that Sir Sidney's fate depends. Had I the power to sooth

his sorrows, I call heaven to witness how joyfully I would undertake the task. But the affections of the heart must find a poor and feeble solace in the sympathies of friendship, while hope presents no gleam of peace, no dawn of consolation."

She paused a few moments, and then continued—

"You say that you have seen Sir Sidney?"

"Not long since—I met him by accident."

"And why did he not accompany you hither?" said Isabella.

"I did not think to make this visit," answered I; "but I have something in my possession which belongs to you: indeed so defaced, that I tremble to present it."

I now took the medallion from my pocket. Miss Hanbury looked at it, and smiled. "I thought I had lost it last night at Lady Amaranth's; the accident is trifling: make no apologies, I conjure you. Where did you find it?"

"You left it at Lady Kencaith's this morning," said I; "but it was then perfect. You will forgive the fault, when you know it was committed by Sir Sidney."

"By accident?" inquired Isabella, half smiling.

"I cannot even add that extenuation of his folly," said I, "nor can I account for your indifference on the subject. But you, Isabella, have lived in the unfeeling world long enough to steel your heart against the mild affections:—a lover's gift is easily replaced—by a new lover."

"Are you frantic?" cried Miss Hanbury hastily. "Will you never hear reason, and act like a thinking mortal?—I conjure you only to have patience till your cousin is of age, and all shall be explained for your repose, Sir Sidney's happiness

ness, and my reputation. As for the last—believe me, Walsingham, when I declare, that you, who ought to be the first to credit my assertion, are the only being upon earth that suspects me of dishonour.”

“The only honest friend who dares tell you what the world’s conjectures buzz abroad,” said I. “You are the reputed mistress of Sir Sidney Aubrey. But romantic fondness can brave the opinions of mankind, and wrapped up in fancied security, set fame and reason at defiance. Pardon me, Isabella, if the last words I utter in your presence compose the admonition of a friend; the language of esteem, the unvarnished declaration of truth, growing from affection, and struggling with resentment.”

“Resentment!—Oh Heaven!” cried Isabella, “in what instance have I merited resentment from you—my earliest friend, the associate of my childhood? You who ought to know my heart, and to judge it with more lenity: I have ever loved you as a brother.”

“Would to God my affection had been of that cold and tranquil nature which might suit a brother’s bosom!” said I; “but I was deceived. I thought that the delights of infancy, the growing sympathy of minds, the rich and pure congeniality of soul which marked our earliest hours, would ripen into something more than friendship.”

“Then you deceived yourself,” cried Isabella; “your virtues, your attachment charmed my mind, but never touched my heart. I have not deceived you, Walsingham.—I have never entertained a thought beyond the intercourse of friendship; and even at this moment, when I have no wish, no reason to dissimble, I frankly own that my heart is devoted to—”

"Sir Sidney Aubrey?" interrupted I.

"No, not to him, by all my hopes of happiness!" replied Isabella; "it is impossible that I ever should be the wife of your unfortunate cousin; though every moment of my life should be joyfully dedicated to the task of friendship, could such attentions in the smallest degree alleviate his sorrows."

At this moment honest Andrew entered the room. "Gude troth, an you must part," said he; "the auld deevil is caballing with my lady, and storming like a witch o' a windy night. I should be laith to ge the vaxen her way, and see the braw lad turned into the street like a beggar's bairne, to please her deev'lish whamsies;—you had better tak my counsel, and gang your gait quietly."

"I will go instantly," said I.

"Indeed, Walsingham, you will act wisely in departing," cried Isabella;—"the tyranny of Mrs. Blagden beneath this roof is insupportable; there is no outrage which she is not capable of planning—no insult which her malice would not put in practice; but her hour of rapacity draws near to a conclusion; for Lady Aubrey's income, when Sir Sidney comes of age, will be diminished;—the sum of six thousand pounds, annually allowed for his board and education, will from that moment cease to be paid; and his fate or fortune will then excite little interest in either Mrs. Blagden's mind, or that of his unfeeling mother."

"He will be placed by fortune above their machinations," said I.

Isabella shook her head, and faintly articulated "I fear he will be wretched!"

We now heard Mrs. Blagden's voice—Andrew renewed his intreaties that I would be gone—and, to avoid altercation I consented.

"You

"You shall see or hear from me again very soon," said Isabella. As I quitted the drawing-room she added—"Remember poor Sidney! endeavour to think kindly of him, to respect his virtues and to pity his misfortunes!"

I had a thousand things to say—a thousand questions to ask; but the clamorous fury approached—Andrew trembled, and Isabella conjured me to be gone; therefore after a short struggle betwixt prudence and inclination, I kissed her hand, and departed.

C H A P. XXX.

I RETURNED to Hanover square, where I found a large party assembled to dinner; among others it was again my misfortune to meet the Duke of Heartwing.—Our greeting was mutually cold and ceremonious; his Grace's pride and my contempt seemed destined to hold a perpetual contest; he determined to demand as I to deny that homage, which too often debases human nature. Lord Kencarth was in high spirits, and repeatedly announced to his guests that the party was made for the purpose of 'seasoning his tutor.'

I observed the Duke frequently looking at me with an eye of suspicion, which I as regularly encountered with the firm gaze of conscious rectitude. As soon as the dessert was placed on the table, with a profusion of wines that would have tempted the palate of a Mussulman, the Duke, with a supercilious tone, drank to the improvement of my pupil's morality.

Doctor Pimpernel, who was also of the party, seconded the toast with the promptitude of adulation—"Your Grace is a most profound observer of human nature!" cried the Doctor, fill-

ing his glass; "and with your experience, what cannot be accomplished?"

"Queer my nobility, if I don't beat dukey out and out!" said Lord Kencarth; "what can he do?—when he was educated, nobody knew any thing that was worth learning. Dish my sence, if I don't match all the old school at any game they will mention, and my tutor shall be judge."

"Is your tutor competent to the task?" interrupted his Grace.

"Competent! dash my jasey, he is equal to any thing," replied his lordship: "why he shall make love with your Grace, or talk Latin with the Doctor, for five hundred, play or pay, quiz my learning if he shan't."

The Doctor hemmed and rubbed his forehead; the Duke smiled contemptuously.

"How can we bring your tutor's superiority to the proof?" said his Grace.

"O! nothing more easy," replied my pupil—"I'll bet you a thousand that he is married before your Grace."

"I shall not make the trial," said I.

"Will your lordship take the bet yourself?" cried the Duke. "Nay, I'll add four times the sum, and allow you ten days to make the experiment."

The Doctor nodded significantly; his Grace, encouraged by the signal, continued—

"What! my Lord! will you suffer your inexhaustible store of new knowledge to be challenged and surpassed by one of the old school?"

Lord Kencarth was evidently piqued by the taunting manner in which his Grace addressed him.—"Dish my sence," said he, "if I have not a great mind to make the bet—but the sum is too trifling—it will not pay the par-
tion

son and buy my wife's court gown; dash my jaffey, make it ten thousand guineas, and I'll take it."

"Done, for ten thousand," said the Duke, "and the period allowed to decide the bet just ten days."

My pupil agreed to the terms, and the bottle went round, as a new flow of animation seemed to warm every bosom, except mine, which was almost petrified by astonishment.

"I'll bet you another thousand," cried Doctor Pimpernel, addressing my pupil, "that his Grace wins your money."

"I take it," said Lord Kencarth; "for dish my nobility, but I have a nice girl in my eye, who will have no objection to wear the ermine,—a little rustic with all the graces of a court; and queer my caxon, if she won't have me, I'll marry my old woman, and do the thing in style."

"Well," cried the Doctor, "this will be a busy week: with his Grace's person and transcendent perfections of mind, he cannot fail to win the wager: for that woman must be senseless indeed, who had not taste to idolize the one and to pay homage to the other."

The whole circle roared with laughter—his Grace looked disconcerted—the Doctor hemmed.

Lord Kencarth interrupted the clamorous mirth with "Quiz me, but Pimpernel's a deep one, for he has said the very same thing to me at least an hundred times."

"His Grace's pretensions require no comment!" continued the Doctor; "the form of Hercules! the front of Jove himself! an eye—"

Again the table roared.

"Damme!" cried the Duke, "I see nothing

to laugh at. Pray, Sir," addressing me, can you explain the cause of this boisterous merriment?"

"The cause is evident, my Lord Duke," said I.

"Curse me, if I know the subject of their mirth," continued his Grace.

"I always believed as much," said I, gravely.

The bottle went round till near eleven o'clock, when coffee was ordered, and the duke proposed adjourning to a ball at the Duchess of Riversford's. The carriages were at the door, and we departed. I would have excused myself by informing Lord Kencarth that the Duchess and I were not even upon speaking terms.

"Pshaw! don't mind that," cried my pupil; "we never go to people's houses because we like them; you need not speak to the Duchess; her doors are open to every body, and we go thither to be amused. Who cares for the hostess?—Dish my jasey, but you must do the right thing, however your inclinations may lead to the contrary."

Still I endeavoured to excuse myself, and still my pupil would take no denial.

"You cannot refuse," said he;—"you'll find all sorts of sports going forward; you will not want for amusement, my hearty. Besides, I shall want you particularly this evening—I have something important to do, and you must assist me.—So, dish my Nobility, tutor, but you must go."

Again I positively refused to accompany his lordship—he continued—

"All the world will be there; and the Duchess informed me this morning, that she had invited the Wells family of the Aubreys. I am told that the visitor is looking for her match—who knows, my hearty, but I may get her to have me,
and

and so dish the old duke for ten thousand without farther trouble."

The idea in an instant vanquished all my scruples, and without further hesitation, I accompanied my pupil to the Duchesse of Riversford's.

C H A P. XXXI.

I FOUND all my old fashionable friends, with a considerable augmentation of new faces. Lady Aubrey's party was not yet come; and with watchful impatience I waited for her arrival. Doctor Pimpernel evinced his qualification as master of the ceremonies, and every couple seemed satisfied with his judicious arrangement. Though I was never fond of dancing, I could not refuse when challenged by the lively and charming Lady Arabella, who, amidst the gay and splendid throng, was the only person that condescended to recollect me.

We had scarcely gone down one dance, when Lady Aubrey, Isabella, and Sir Sidney entered. My heart throbbed with a variety of sensations, while I anticipated events that would probably occur during the evening.—I have seldom found my presentiment erroneous, and therefore considered the impression of that moment as the sure prognostic of what really happened.

Lady Aubrey had been only a few minutes in the room, when my unlucky form met her eyes.—Her countenance betrayed a mixture of astonishment and indignation, which was evident, not only to my partner, but to every person that stood near us. She fixed her stern gaze upon me, and followed me down the dance with persecuting malignity. When I came to the lower end of the room, I observed her in close conversation with Isabella, and distinctly heard her say, "I command

command you, Miss Hanbury, not to take any notice of the abandoned profligate.—He has sufficiently disgraced his family and connections already.”

I smiled.—Miss Hanbury was overwhelmed with confusion.—Sir Sidney sat on a sofa, so sorrowfully pensive, that he seemed alone in the busy circle, and wholly inattentive to the surrounding scene of animation.

Isabella had not been long in the room when she attracted the notice of the Duke of Heartwing. His attention was instantly fixed, and they entered into conversation, at once easy and familiar. The Duchess encouraged the gallantry of his Grace; and Isabella did not seem displeased with the marked admiration which her personal graces evidently excited. I watched Sir Sidney's countenance;—it betrayed not the smallest emotion;—there was no symptom of fear; no flush of jealous inquietude. All the coquetry of Isabella, all the assiduity of the Duke, passed before his eyes unnoticed, and I was at a loss to comprehend the meaning of his apathy.

Lady Arabella proposed resting, and I was not sorry to embrace an opportunity of conversing with my pupil, who had several times during the dance made signals of impatience to speak with me.

As soon as I could with propriety leave Lady Arabella, I retired to a small card-room with Lord Kencarth, who, taking me by the arm, desired, without ceremony, that I would convey a message from him to Isabella.—“Dish my nobility, tutor,” said he, “if I won't have her! She is quite the thing, my hearty, and seems upon the look-out for a husband: queer me if I don't hate the idea of a long courtship; so do you go and tell her,
that,

that, dash my wig if I don't marry her to-morrow morning."

"Marry Miss Hanbury!" said I, with astonishment, which I could not conceal.

"Why not?" cried his lordship; "she's a nice girl, and I shall get the Duke's ten thousand by the bargain. Queer my sponce, but I must win my bet at all events, and I think I cannot act wiser than to take the little Welsh girl off the hands of her dragon, Lady Aubrey:—so, tutor, do you go and tell her so, while I wait here for her answer, and don't stay profling about it, lest I should alter my mind."

"The proposal would come with more propriety from yourself," said I; "making love by proxy is so perfectly absurd, that I should be the butt of eternal ridicule. You must plead your own cause, if you hope to succeed."

"Dash me, but I'm not up to it," replied my pupil. "I never yet had courage to talk about a parson. I can't make love—quiz me if I can—and for that reason I have always sported an old girl of fashion;—they save one the trouble, you know. But this is losing time," continued his lordship; "there's Heartwing close at her elbow;—he'll nab the little one if I don't keep a good look-out;—and so chouse me out of a wife and ten thousand into the bargain."

"Will you marry a woman to whom you are entirely a stranger?" said I.

"Why not?" cried my pupil. "Dish my jasey if it is not the only way. I sha'n't know her bad qualities, and her good ones will the more surprise me. Besides, I am seldom twelve hours in the same mind;—and she that takes me, must catch me when she can, queer my nobility: I'm not one of your dangles;—I can't wait for a girl till till she is old enough to be a grandmother

mother, and then make her a lady to prove myself a fool. So take my message, and let's have no prying about it."

At this instant the Duke of Heartwing entered the card-room. There was a smile of triumph on his countenance, that bespoke a mind perfectly satisfied with its prospects of success: "How do you feel about your bet?" said his Grace, addressing my pupil; "will you give five thousand to be off? You had better accept the proposal, for it is the last time I shall make it."

"Not a guinea, by all that is quizzical:—dish me, but I'd marry the witch of Endor, rather than lose my wager," replied his lordship.

The Duke smiled.

Lady Aubrey and Miss Hanbury interrupted the conversation, and I went in search of Lady Arabella, happy to escape from the importunities of my eccentric pupil.

I found my pretty partner in close conversation with Sir Sidney Aubrey. On seeing me she quitted her seat, and, with some embarrassment, inquired why I had so ungallantly deserted her. "Indeed," said she, with an arch smile, which contradicted the impressive mildness of her voice, "you are an unpardonable truant. But you philosophers are monitrously savage, and wondrously apt to desert those who are most fond of your society. Your amiable cousin is not so pedantic;—he has been saying all sorts of civil things to me; and if you do not take care, he will become a great favourite, I assure you."

"My cousin is a universal lover," said I. "A lady's favours are little valued by one of so changeable a nature."

"I deny the charge," cried Sir Sidney. "Heaven

ven knows that my heart is incapable of changing."

"I told you so," interrupted Lady Arabella, "and it was vastly presumptuous in you to dispute my opinion. Did you not confess to me that you were in love to distraction?" continued her ladyship, addressing my cousin.

"I plead guilty," replied Sir Sidney.

Lady Arabella's eyes sparkled with conscious victory:—"Well," said she, giving Sir Sidney's arm a gentle tap with her fan; "you are a charming creature, in spite of all your melancholy humours; and if I were not an admirer of a certain marble-hearted pedant, that shall be nameless, I should like vastly to fall in love with you."

My cousin bowed; and I scarcely knew how to interpret her declaration.

Lady Arabella again rallied me on my gravity of manners:—"I protest, you are perfectly savage!" cried she; "you will destroy the charming vivacity of your pupil, if you set him so freezing an example; and in another winter, he will be fit for nothing but to study Greek, and give lectures on philosophy. A few such ice-plants would chill the whole parterre of fashionable life; and not a flower would be seen to lift its head, from the venerable Amaranth, to the 'Rose of beauty'—that somebody has so tunefully celebrated!—For, there are moments, when the most frigid bosoms confess a glow of animation;—the sun is not concealed from the coldest regions eternally."

"I protest I do not comprehend you," said I.

"Well! you are the greatest savage I ever met with!" replied Lady Arabella; "and I should add, the greatest hypocrite, but that poets are allowed to deal in fiction. The gravity of self possession, and the austerity of wisdom, will, nevertheless, give way

way to softer sensations, when eyes "love to gaze, and gaze to love!"

I now found that the verses which I had left at Lady Aubrey's had been given by Isabella to Sir Sidney; and presented, by him, to Lady Arabella. With an assumed frown, and a tone of the most ridiculous solemnity, she opened the paper, and began aloud to read the stanzas. I conjured her to desist. My intreaties only made her more determined to torment me, and several persons collecting round her, I was at a loss how to act. Among others, Lord Kencarth hastened towards us:—the verses were read, and every line criticised with merciless ridicule. Lady Arabella, whose vivacity resisted all my earnest solicitations to forbear, after concluding the last stanza, presented the paper to Isabella:—"Permit me, divine enchantress!" said she, with a tone and gesture irresistibly comical, "permit me to lay at your feet the romantic effusions of a rustic lover; whose pure and ardent flame mocks all the heroes of old, that embellish the annals of adventurous chivalry!"

Isabella blushed:—my pupil stared:—Sir Sidney looked grave; and the whole circle enjoyed my confusion.

"Queer me, tutor, but I have found you out!" cried Lord Kencarth:—"you are taken in, my deep one;—dishd, by all that is quizzical! The game is against you; and since you meant to play booty, dash my nobility but I'll be even with you! So hark'ye, Miss, let you and I have a little conversation to-morrow morning: I have asked Lady Aubrey's leave, and the thing will soon be settled."

Isabella darted from the circle, and my pupil followed.

Lady Arabella, taking my arm, and leading me to the farthest end of the room, after laughing heartily, inquired where I had learnt to make love

so delightfully :—" Yet," said she, " though you treated me so savagely, I am monstrously sorry that I have exposed you to such ridicule. I have seen Miss Hanbury all the evening coquetting with Lord Kencarth ; and I really thought it scandalous to desert such a lover for such a substitute. Forgive my raillery, I conjure you," continued Lady Arabella, at the same time assuming a serious and tender tone,— " and believe, that nothing but my regard for you should have induced me to act so absurdly."

I bowed, but was too much vexed to make any answer.

After hesitating a few moments, during which the expression of her countenance entirely changed, she continued—" Say that you are not much chagrined by my nonsensical levity. Indeed, Mr. Ainsforth, it would give me more pain than I dare acknowledge to suppose, even for a moment, that any folly of mine could distress your feelings. The verses were given to me by Sir Sidney Aubrey as specimens of your poetical talents, and while I admired the subject of your adoration—forgive me if I confess—she was also an object of my envy."

" Can envy, the most poisonous of weeds, thrive in so gentle and so kind a bosom?" said I.

" What other name can I give to feelings so ridiculous?" said Lady Arabella. " It ought not to interest me—it ought not to give me pain."

Again she hesitated.

" What ought not to interest you?" said I.

" Your attention to Miss Hanbury."

" I have known her from an infant; I love her as I should love a sister," said I.

" Ah! how surely does your pen contradict your assertion," interrupted Lady Arabella.

I found that the tone of voice, and levity of manners, which, till that moment, seemed to characterize her conversation, were merely assumed as the

the adopted nonsense of fashionable life, and that the lovely Lady Arabella, who had hitherto appeared to be the most affected of high-bred triflers, was, in reality, a reasonable being."

Sir Sidney now joined us. "What an interesting tête-à-tête!" cried he, endeavouring to force a smile, which the fixed solemnity of his countenance sternly opposed. "Mr. Ainsforth is a practised deceiver," continued he, "and I counsel you not to believe him."

Lady Arabella scarcely knew how to answer; but with some difficulty, and a deep sigh, replied—"You are all deceivers; yet I think Mr. Ainsforth deserves confidence as much as any of you."

"There never was a more decided hypocrite," continued my cousin. "Even at the moment that he hopes to impose on your credulity, his vagrant heart is sighing for Miss Hanbury."

"Can you not deny the charge?" said Lady Arabella.

I made no reply.

"You are silent:—well, I can only admire your choice, and thank Sir Sidney for his caution," continued her ladyship.

Lady Aubrey now requested my cousin to find Isabella, and to inform her that she was going. He departed, leaving me with Lady Arabella. There was a something bewitchingly animated in her manner and conversation—something so impressive, whether grave or gay, that I had not power to leave her. Sir Sidney conducted his mother to her carriage: Lord Kenarth proposed returning home; and I took leave of Lady Arabella, after obtaining her permission to renew my visit on the following morning.

C H A P. XXXII.

I PASSED the remainder of the night in rumination. The childish levity of Isabella's conduct, the evident indifference of Sir Sidney on the subject, and Lady Arabella's impressive conversation, by turns occupied my thoughts. My interview with Miss Hanbury, on the preceding day at Lady Aubrey's, convinced me that her attachment to my cousin was at an end, and that her aversion to me was insuperable. With this conviction strongly, deeply engraved upon my mind, Lady Arabella's attentions could not be remembered without an emotion of gratitude—a sentiment of esteem. She was young, lovely, amiable, and ingenuous. I had been persecuted by fortune, neglected by Isabella. Pride began to gain an ascendancy over attachment, and I resolved at least to cultivate Lady Arabella's esteem, and to try, as my last resource, whether jealousy would not awaken the latent sparks of that affection, which once warmed the bosom of my ungrateful idol.

I passed the next day chiefly in Lady Arabella's society. In the morning we strolled to Kensington gardens, and in the evening I attended her to the opera. Every moment augmented my admiration, while her attentions convinced me that the glow of esteem was reciprocal. Isabella's determined coldness had wearied my mind into disgust, and I began to consider my attachment as a proof of obstinate perseverance, no less absurd than hopeless.

A week passed, during which I saw but little of my pupil, and still less of the Aubrey family. My constant attentions to Lady Arabella occupied my mind entirely: I was her companion at all public places, and consequently, the object of universal envy. My vanity was flattered; my revenge, in a
great

great measure, gratified. Still, Rosanna, my heart partook of no share in the triumph, and if a change could decidedly take place, I hoped for repose and indifference, rather than for any glowing sensation of the heart which could boast the smallest affinity to love.

The period now rapidly advanced which was to decide Lord Kencarth's wager with the Duke of Heartwing. On the eighth day, I observed my pupil more than commonly agitated. There was a strange and unaccountable reserve in his manner and conversation that excited my curiosity. I inquired how he felt his mind respecting the Duke's approaching triumph?—He made no answer, but looked more wretched than a culprit who awaited the hour of execution. After passing some time in sullen silence, he addressed me—"Dash me, Ainsforth, but I am forry to be the messenger of bad news: yet the truth must come out; and therefore the sooner you know it the better. Lady Aubrey has settled the business, and I mean to marry Isabella to-morrow morning."

"Impossible!" said I, almost petrified with astonishment.

"Dith my nobility, but 'tis true," cried my pupil. "The Dowager spoke a good word:—the neat-one was willing; and Sir Sidney has settled the whole business to the satisfaction of all parties. Now, tutor, though the ring is bought, and the parson bespoke, if you like the girl, dash my jasey, if I won't be off after all; for now it comes to a pinch, queer my caxon, if I have the heart to do a dishonourable thing, or to rob any man of happiness, for the enhancement of my own. Speak the word, and quiz me, but I'll do the thing handsomely."

This intelligence for a moment made my fortitude stagger; but the indifference of Isabella would
not

not even then have alienated my affections, had not Lord Kencarth's generosity decided my resolution. "Take her," said I; "she does not deserve to influence so generous a mind."

"I will have her, but upon one condition," cried my pupil; "which is, that you will marry Lady Arabella. She is a nice girl, dash my sconce; and if you don't take her for better or for worse, quiz me, but I'll lose my wager."

"You cannot answer for the caprices of a woman," said I; "a young, a lovely, an ambitious woman. Lady Arabella is amiable; but she looks forward to a prouder alliance."

"The greater the danger, the more the honour," replied my pupil. "Quiz me, but the girl is ready to leap into your arms; and you are such a flat that some deeper one will oust you while you are probing about it. Since you give up a wife for me, dash my jasey, but I am bound to find a substitute."

While we were conversing on the subject, Doctor Pimpernel's name was announced. He entered the room with an air of triumph, and with insulting solemnity informed us that the Duke was married.

"Married!" exclaimed I, looking at my pupil, who loudly vociferated—"Then dash my wig, but I have had a lucky escape; for, queer my nobility, if, of the two, I hadn't rather been hanged than married. D—me, Ainsforth, you may now take your choice; the little Welch coquette, or Lady Arabella."

"Lady Arabella!" cried the Doctor.

"Aye, my hearty!—Tutor is up to your gossip; he knows how to arrange business, as well as the best match-maker among you. But, quiz my caxon, who has the Duke married?"

"That

"That remains a secret for the present," replied Doctor Pimpernel.

"Come, no underhand work, master doctor," cried my pupil; "I am not to be tricked out of ten thousand by a sham. I'll see the bride; dash my wig, but I'll see the parson too:—so come along, tutor—let's be off. The carriage is at the door, and we'll go row the deep-ones. Dish me, but I'm in luck."

"What! to have lost ten thousand guineas?" said I.

"O I queer my caxon, any thing but a wife!" replied his lordship, darting out of the room in high spirits.

We stepped into the carriage, and the coachman was ordered to drive with all possible expedition to the Duke of Heartwing's.

C H A P. XXXIII.

ON our arrival at the door, Lord Kencarth sent in his name, with his request to see the Duke immediately. We were ushered into the saloon, where we found his Grace in close conversation with Doctor Pimpernel, who, notwithstanding our speed, had reached the Duke's before us. My pupil desired to know whether the intelligence conveyed to him by the Doctor was true: and requested that his Grace would give him such incontestable proofs of his marriage as should authorize the payment of the sum lost.

"I pledge you my word of honour," said Doctor Pimpernel, "that I had the supreme felicity of giving the divine creature away! and more transcendent beauty, heightened by superlative purity of mind and reputation, never embellished the honours of a ducal coronet! I had the pleasure of presenting his Grace to the angelic mortal! and
never

never since the union of Venus and Adonis, did so illustrious a pair offer up their vows at the hymeneal altar !”

“ This may be all very true, Doctor,” said Lord Kencarth ; “ but, queer my nobility, if I don’t see the Duchess, and the parson, the clerk, the licence, and the whole paraphernalia of the business. I’m not to be done over.”

The clergyman who had performed the ceremony was now ushered in. My pupil began to think, that the affair was beyond a jest. “ Well,” said he sighing, “ now let us see the lady.”

“ More loveliness and virtue never graced the exalted sphere of nobility !” cried Doctor Pimpernel. “ I have long known the divine creature ! and it gives me infinite pleasure to see, that superior rank will be the reward of superior virtue ! Her Grace will take the lead of all the fashionables !—she will outshine the very sun !—she will kill the envious with the brilliancy of her attractions, and become the honour of her illustrious consort ! The Duke has only known her Grace three days—but he is enchanted ! I have long seen and admired her. She is nobly born, and highly educated ;—but she wanted fortune to draw her into notice. She was a rich gem in a mine ; a pearl in the vast ocean ; a star in a dark hemisphere !—Well !”

“ Dish my sconce ! let us see her,” interrupted my pupil somewhat impatiently.

The Duke’s countenance was the index of a mind exhilarated by success :—“ You will see, my Lord,” said he, with a triumphant smile, “ you will be convinced, that the ‘ Old School ’ is no bad thing, and that a man on the wrong side sixty may aspire to a beautiful woman, when twenty-one cannot make a conquest. I have to thank your lordship’s impetuosity, and my friend Pimpernel’s discernment, for one of the most celestial stars that
ever

ever moved on the amorous horizon!—and I flatter myself that the Duchess of Licartwing will add a wreath to my coronet, which will outblaze all the gems that have been placed there by my long train of ancestors.”

“Most likely,” said I; “but can we not see this brilliant constellation?”

“Aye, dish my wig, let us have a peep, if only to console me for the loss of my ten thousand,” cried my pupil

“Well!” said Doctor Pimpernel, “I will endeavour to persuade her Grace: she is all exquisite sensibility;—timid as Daphne—yet haughty as the wife of Jove! You must submit to see her only for a moment; this sudden marriage has overwhelmed the delicacy of her feelings;—but the felicity of making the Duke a present of ten thousand guineas, to compensate for her want of fortune, vanquished her scruples, and rendered his Grace the happiest of mortals!”

The Doctor quitted the saloon:—the Duke hummed an opera air as he threw himself on a sofa, and we waited with the utmost impatience for her Grace’s arrival.

In a few minutes she entered.—Her face was veiled, but her form was indeed beautiful. She wore the dress of a vestal; a robe of thin white satin falling to her feet, and a zone of pearls, presented that morning by the illustrious bridegroom, composed the whole of her paraphernalia. The thickness of her veil prevented our seeing her features; but she held it, with a hand, white as the most polished marble. I approached her; she trembled.

“Are you satisfied?” said the Duke exultingly.

“With as much as we see, it is impossible to be otherwise,” answered I. “Yet I think my pupil would be still more gratified by a sight of her
Grace’s

Grace's features. She will forgive that curiosity which is excited by the beauty of her form, and the purity of her mind will feel no debasement from the gaze of respectful admiration."

She sighed, but remained motionless as a statue.

"My Lord Duke, will you request the favour of her Grace to unveil?" said I.

"That proof of condescension will depend entirely upon her own will," replied the Duke. The lovely bride retired towards the door, which opened to a splendid boudoir; her limbs scarcely supported her—she was near falling—when I caught her on my arm,—the veil fell from her face, and my eyes instantly recognized the amiable—but unfortunate—Julie de Beaumont.

I had sufficient command over myself not to betray her. I whispered, "Fear nothing; I rejoice in your good fortune."—She revived. The Duke coldly inquired what ailed her Grace? and Doctor Pimpernel attributed the sudden emotion of her mind to the awkwardness of her situation. She retired. The clergyman and the doctor proved the marriage. The Duke was enchanted with his success, and we departed; I to muse in silence on the revolutions of fortune, and my worthy pupil to lament his folly, and the loss of his ten thousand guineas.

C H A P. XXXIV.

ON the following morning I found that Lady Aubrey had quitted London, and set out for Glenowen, in order to celebrate her marriage with Edward Blagden. Sir Sidney and Isabella were the companions of her journey; the latter having written a letter to Lord Kencarth, declining the proposal of his hand, and bidding him a decisive farewell.

My pupil was more gratified than offended by Miss Hanbury's refusal ;—the caprice of the moment was over ; and the inducement to sacrifice his liberty existing no longer, he felicitated himself in his escape, and swore never again to make a bet upon so perilous a subject.

I continued my visits to Lady Arabella with undiminished assiduity. Miss Hanbury's trifling coquetry had palsied the ardour of my affection, and I resolved, at least, to punish her for the fickleness of her conduct.

Three weeks had passed in the society of my new idol, when a visit from Doctor Pimpernel once more undermined my prospect of happiness. A private conversation with the Duchess, which lasted some hours, determined her Grace on forbidding my visits. I received my *congé* with considerable chagrin, and the lovely Lady Arabella the next morning set out for Bath with her mother.

Once more defeated in my hopes of felicity, I opened my heart to my worthy though eccentric pupil. He counselled me to follow Lady Arabella, and promised to accompany me in my chivalrous exploit with all the zeal of a brave and trusty Squire. The temptation was too powerful to be resisted ; and early on the following morning we set out together. Nothing important occurred during our rapid journey. We reached Bath in sixteen hours ;—but to our infinite surprise we discovered that the Duchess of Riversford had altered her plan of destination, and proceeded with her daughter to a distant part of the country.

On the evening of our arrival, I determined to visit the patron of my youth, the worthy and liberal Mr. Randolph. My pupil remained at Bath, to be present at a race on which he had a considerable sum depending ; while I departed for Bristol

to pay the debt so long due from gratitude and friendship.

I found Mr. Randolph in a state of health that menaced his speedy dissolution. He received me with open arms :—all that had passed he recalled to memory, though I wished most earnestly to bury the prominent events in eternal oblivion. He lamented that I had endured a temporary captivity on his account ; while he attributed the trifling service which I rendered him on the night of my walk from Bristol to Bath, as the cause of his renewed prosperity, and preservation from death, at a moment when reason was almost vanquished by the pressure of misfortune.

Mr. Randolph requested that I would remain with him, at least, some days. “ I have many friends,” said he, “ who unite in reconciling my mind to the will of Heaven, and in smoothing my path to that resting-place, where the vicissitudes of fortune will perplex me no longer. But you are entitled to more than common esteem ; you demand from me the affection of a father. In that momentous hour, when adversity frowned and every hope forsook me, unknown to you, with no claim to your compassion, but that which my misfortunes gave me, I found in your breast an advocate, from your genuine philanthropy the means of preservation.”

I conjured him to think of it no more.

“ Not think of it, Walsingham !” said he, pressing his hand upon his heart ; “ while vitality warms this bosom, I shall never cease to remember it. Since my return to Bristol, Fortune has been profuse of her favours, and every plan of emolument has been successful, even beyond my most sanguine wishes. My West India plantations have been prolific ; my commercial concerns prosperous ; and now I am preparing to quit this busy

scene of toil and inquietude, with the conscious gratification, that destiny has at last afforded me the means of rendering you happy."

His language penetrated my heart; for while I viewed his emaciated frame, his hollow and sunk eyes, and heard the feeble voice, struggling with a short and difficult respiration, I anticipated the termination of a life which had done honour to humanity. My affliction was acute and certain;—and my reflections were mournful, as my distress was poignant.

Mr. Randolph observed the gloom which marked my features, and with a faint smile endeavoured to treat the subject lightly. "All the joys of this sublunary state are transient," said he; "and those vexations, even if they amount to sorrows, which alienate the soul from the fascinations of existence, may be valued as possessing a beneficial tendency. I am weary of a toilsome life, and sigh for a long holiday of rest. You will well employ the wealth I shall leave behind me."

He stopped abruptly, and took several turns round the room. "But we will change this melancholy topic," continued he, with an assumed gaiety; "for I must not carry a countenance of sorrow to a scene of joy. To-morrow I shall witness the felicity of a friend,—and you shall bear me company."

I bowed assent, but my mind was too deeply interested in Mr. Randolph's fate to enter rapidly on a new train of thinking. The day passed in anxious hopes and fears that wrung my heart. The friend of my youth, the voluntary patron, whose liberality had completed the task so zealously begun by Mr. Hanbury, was hourly sinking to the grave!—Could I witness the desolation of such distinguished virtues, and be tranquil? Yet, Rosanna, however severely I felt the sorrow of that moment, it

was

was of little magnitude in comparison with that which I have since suffered.

Early on the following morning we repaired to Clifton, to be present at the marriage of Mr. Randolph's friend. I waited in the carriage while he stopped at the lodgings of the bridegroom. The party had only a few minutes before repaired to the village church, which stood on the summit of the hill, not far distant. The day was brilliantly clear, though it was winter; the bells were ringing as we approached the church yard, and every object seemed to assume the lively garb of rustic celebration. We entered the aisle; the ceremony was just begun; the bride, though not in the rich bloom of juvenile attractions, was uncommonly handsome; and the happy partner of her choice, was my old acquaintance Mr. M'Arthur.

But how, Rosanna, shall I delineate, how describe the awful and soul-agonizing scene, which followed rapidly on the hour of anticipated joy! — Oh, Heaven! while my hand traces the dreadful events of that momentous period, my heart shudders, and my brain shrinks like the sensitive herb! — would to God it were withered for ever!

Near the bride, like the pale spectre of a departed angel, robed in a vest of white cambric, and with a countenance serenely pensive, stood Amelia Woodford. She was deeply intent on the awful ceremony then performing; and, as we stole gently along the aisle, did not observe us. My heart throbbed with a new torrent of circulation. I approached the group; Amelia turned her eyes towards me; and in a moment sunk on the marble steps before the altar.

Colonel Aubrey and Mrs. Woodford knelt and supported her. The ceremony was interrupted, and my situation was undescribable. Mrs. Woodford intreated me to depart:—Mr. Randolph's con-

sternation was evident; and Colonel Aubrey's countenance evinced such sensations of distress as pierced every fibre in my bosom. My feet seemed rooted to the pavement:—I scarcely knew where I was, while every thing around me looked horribly obscure.

Mr. Randolph shook my arm:—"Walsingham," said he, "whatever this interruption may threaten, it is but too evident that you are the cause of it. I conjure you to quit the scene."

Colonel Aubrey conveyed Amelia into the vestry, and I permitted Mr. Randolph to guide my steps back to Mr. M^cArthur's lodgings.

I could not rest in a state of uncertainty, but inquiring where Mrs. Woodford resided, hastened thither as swiftly as my feet would bear me. Her house was at some distance, near the Hot-wells. I rushed into the parlour, and demanded of the servant whether any intelligence had arrived respecting Miss Woodford. This question brought on a farther elucidation, and I was informed that Amelia had been just fourteen days the wife of Colonel Aubrey; that on the following week they purposed sailing for Gibraltar;—and that the bride of my friend Mr. M^cArthur, was Lady Kencarth, the amiable mother of my eccentric pupil.

I had scarcely received this intelligence, when a carriage stopped at the door. I flew to meet it;—but, Oh God! what an object did my startled eyes encounter! The noble, the benignant, the generous Aubrey, bearing in his trembling arms the lifeless form of his adored Amelia! My brain seemed to shudder;—every limb stiffened with horror!—I gazed wildly round me. The stupendous rocks which hung over the slow winding Avon seemed to blacken while I beheld them. I fancied that my presence darkened the scene of wonders;—I was wild and frantic.

Colonel

Colonel Aubrey conveyed the cold remains of all that he loved in this world of troubles to a small parlour, where he gently reclined them on a sofa;—and falling on his knees, with his hands clasped in the agony of sorrow, and his eyes fixed in speechless fondness, remained motionless as a statue,—gazing on the placid countenance of that celestial shadow, whose meek and injured spirit had flown to happier regions.

Every aid was ineffectually administered to reanimate the fountain of exhausted vitality: but the source was petrified!—the once warmly throbbing bosom was frozen by the fixed shaft of death! That lip, from which truth and harmony had stolen, even to the hearts of all who heard her, was sealed in icy bonds; and that cheek, where the living rose glowed as an emblem of the purest spring, now seemed to smile at the weary spirit's final emancipation.

I approached Colonel Aubrey—his eyes were still bent on the corpse, and all his senses were absorbed by sorrow. I would have snatched the lifeless hand of Amelia—I would have kissed it, but the distracted husband, stretching forth his arm, exclaimed, “Pollute not the ashes of your victim! insult not the cold remains of the departed angel whom you have murdered!”

Mr. Randolph, who had followed me, at that moment entered the room, and looked aghast. Lady Kencarth's carriage stopped at the door; I heard the deep groan issuing from Mrs. Woodford's bosom: the combination of horrors seemed to encompass me—I quitted the scene of death, and darted out of the house like the fiend of Desolation.

The day became gloomy, the wintry wind howled among the stupendous rocks, and the rain poured in torrents down their craggy sides; while I, scarcely knowing whither I bent my way, continued

to walk rapidly along the narrow path which winds beside the Avon.—The phantom of Amelia seemed to follow me—her voice in imagination met my ear amidst the loudest whistling of the storm, and my mind was agonized to frenzy. I threw my feverish form at the foot of a jutting precipice, and resigned myself to the very misery of sorrow. The elements conspired to aid the dreadful chaos of my bewildered brain. I had outraged the very laws of Nature, and her dreadful artillery was pointed at the devoted wretch who had been her pupil, and was destined to become her victim.

I remained in the solitary seclusion till evening closed; the twilight was tempestuous; the black clouds rapidly shut out the last glimpse of day, as if impatient to deepen the horrors of my destiny. The torrent roared down the rocks beside me; the raven screamed above; the keen blast hurried by, sometimes whistling shrilly through the flinty apertures, and at others deeply moaning between the dark and towering ramparts; while the troubled current of the Avon roiled with a fullen murmur along the winding and tremendous chasm.

Such a scene, Rosanna, would have maddened a stoic's brain: I leave you to judge what were the sensations of a being, born to be the very fool of nature!

C H A P. XXXV.

I REMAINED in this dark and troubled solitude the whole night in the wildness of despair! I had left my hat at Mrs. Woodford's; the rain beat incessantly on my burning head; the wind pierced my agitated bosom; and at the first glimpse of dawn, I presented to the pitiless eye of Heaven the image of a maniac. I rose from my melancholy seat; my limbs were almost petrified; my cloaths
were

were drenched with the mid-night torrents, and my strength exhausted by the agonies of affliction.

With slow and feeble steps I returned towards Bristol. I was obliged to pass Mrs. Woodford's lodging : as I approached the house my persecuting genius prompted me to enter. A female servant opened the door ; I rushed by her, and hastened towards the room where I had, on the preceding day, left the lifeless remains of the once-beautiful Amelia.

I found Colonel Aubrey seated near the sofa, with his arms folded, his eyes fixed on the corpse, and his countenance settled into the deepest melancholy. The faint dawn entered the window ; a taper, burnt to the socket, shed a glimmering light around the apartment. I threw myself at the feet of my friend and patron.—“ Behold,” said I, “ the wretch who was sent into this breathing world for your destruction !—the ill-fated mortal, whom destiny has at last driven to the worst scene of human sorrow ! It is fit that I should expiate my crime ; I only wish, before I shake off this weary miserable being, to convince your mind that I have been an involuntary criminal.”

Colonel Aubrey remained unmoved, while the paleness of his cheek, and the frequent tears which flowed from the full channels of his heart, convinced me that his ear was deaf to every sound, his senses beyond the touch of every pang except that which destiny had rendered incurable.

I returned to Bristol. My mind was bent on self-destruction, and every object that met my eyes seemed hateful to me ; I loathed the very sun. The busy hum of men jarred on my aching brain, and a burning, wasting fever scorched up the source of circulation. I stopped and purchased a phial of that drug, which can lull the throb of agony, or wrap the weary sufferer in the long sleep of death.

death. The boy who sold me the fatal potion, seemed unwilling to let me have so large a quantity.—I pleaded the inconvenience of a painful malady, and the necessity for having the means of rest during a tedious journey. These reasons silenced his scruples, and I hastened to Mr. Randolph's with my pernicious treasure.

On my arrival, I found a letter which had been sent express from Glenowen; I flew to my chamber, and eagerly opened it; the contents were as follows—

“ Lose not a moment, Walsingham, if you wish to see the expiring Lady Aubrey. The awful period of elucidation is at hand; hasten, I conjure you, hasten to witness the eventful moment.

“ ISABELLA.”

I wrote two letters—one to Lord Kencarth, apologizing for my sudden departure—and the other to Mr. Randolph, who still remained with Mrs. Woodford at the Hot-wells.

The close of my disastrous life seemed rapidly approaching, and my weary mind was scarcely susceptible of any deeper impression than that which it had received by the death of Mrs. Aubrey.

Before noon, I set out in a post-chaise for Glenowen; the scene of my early sorrows—the spot where my infant mind had been poisoned by prejudices, which the expansion of reason had not been able to exterminate. Oh Rosanna! how heavy did my heart feel! how perpetually did memory turn to past events, and at every recapitulated scene bid me shrink almost to annihilation.—For what could I then hope to live?—to regret the prospects which time had seen fading in hourly sadness? to bear the reproaches of violated friendship, the agonies of self-reproof, the pain of disappointed hope, and the stigma of ingratitude? These were the links

links that chained my troubled spirit, that bade it linger round the ruins of departed peace ; and still I hugged them to my heart, though they chilled it to the centre. I had no sweet incentive which might allure me on to cherish life ; no dawning perspective to calm the throbbings of my lacerated heart ; no watchful eye to cool my feverish brain with the balm of sympathetic pity. Oh Nature ! amidst thy infinity of changes, thou hadst not one hour of consolation in store for a wretch whom thy stern laws had propelled to error ; thy sensibilities, thy fatal sensibilities to guilt ! I looked on every side :—I endeavoured, among the threatening storms that gathered, to descry one ray that promised a closing hour of calm and tempered lustre. All was dark and dreary ; while I felt conviction strike upon my mind, that, though Time's perpetually moving wing might overshadow the lengthening catalogue of griefs engraved upon my heart, it never could be entirely effaced, but by the sleep of death. Then, why did I protract the pangs, the miseries which were destined ultimately to close the scene of unexampled sorrow.

My journey was tedious and melancholy. I fancied every moment an age, while suspense and doubt pressed painfully on my senses. The idea of Lady Aubrey's death gave rise to a variety of hopes and fears. A dread, which was blended with the impatience of curiosity, possessed my mind ; and I rather thought it incumbent on me to summon all my fortitude for a new trial, than anticipate a release from the heavy pressure of misfortune. The depth of winter rendered the roads in some places nearly impassable ; and after two days and a night of incessant travelling, during which time I met with innumerable obstacles to lengthen the weary hours, at last I arrived within five miles of Glenowen.

The

The floods, which had been formed by mountain torrents in many parts of the country, were particularly deep in the vicinity of the manor house. I therefore discharged my chaise, and determined to proceed on foot, by a cross-road, which would shorten the distance at least three miles. It was at the close of day that I set out to complete my journey. The weather was clear and frosty, and the moon, just rising above the dark eminences beyond Glenowen, promised to light me, secure from every danger. I felt a strange and mournful depression of spirits, as I approached the church-yard, —the resting-place of the pure and gentle Penelope. When I came to the grave, I stopped; —I could not pass it without an emotion of sorrow, which rushed into my eyes, and quivered round my heart. The moon beams fell on the white spire of the village house of prayer, and the long grass, which the bleak wind from the mountains waved to and fro over my parent's ashes, was sprinkled with the chilling dews of evening. I raised my eyes towards the heavens; the sky was dappled with white clouds gliding rapidly along, at times wrapping the moon in a thin veil which cast a shadowy light on every distant object. The manor-house, which during the full splendour of summer was embosomed in a rich dell of vegetation, was now visible amidst the bare and leafless branches. The whole scene was changed since I had last beheld it, and the tenour of my mind seemed to follow the desolation of nature, with a degree of sympathy that was undescribable.

While I stood for a moment near my mother's grave, I heard a foot-passenger at the little gate which opened from the church-yard to the park; he was whistling,—but on a sudden became silent. I observed him looking over the low wall, and thinking myself the object of curiosity, was proceeding

ceeding to meet him, when in an instant he was gone. I called, "Who passes?" No person answered. I proceeded across the park towards the wood,—the scene of that dreadful night's events which banished me from my native home, to wander over the earth, the spot of capricious fortune.

When I came to the termination of the wood, I found that the lower ground of the park which led to the manor-house was entirely inundated by the various torrents that had fallen from the adjacent precipices. I had no possible means of reaching the family mansion, but by returning more than half a mile, and taking a winding path from the churchyard, along the side of the mountain. With speed that was accelerated by the impatience of disappointment, I re-trod the wood, and re-passed the grave of my mother. The night became cloudy, and the moon dimly shone through a thick and hazy atmosphere. Still I pursued my way, till I came to a part of the acclivity, where the path was rugged and narrow, when I again heard footsteps following, and again challenged the person, by an inquiry, whether I was in the right road to the manor-house: no answer was returned, and I continued to walk hastily.

I now recollected that the path which I trod was originally made by order of Sir Edward Aubrey, for my pleasure, when I was an infant. It was by the same road that I used to ascend the breezy eminence, and imbibe the morning air when health and innocence were the inmates of my bosom. I remembered the sportive gambols I had played to excite the smiles of my patron, and the many summer evenings when we had descended the rough slope, as the sun sunk in the horizon, diffusing its crimson lustre over the surrounding scenery.

While

While I was wrapt in reflection, and almost heedless of the narrow path, which hung over a declivity of considerable depth, on a sudden I felt my arms seized and pinioned behind me.—I resisted:—the assailant pushed me with all his strength, and I fell headlong down the side of the mountain. In my descent I received a blow on the temple, from a projecting block of stone, and with great difficulty saved myself from rolling to the bottom, where the waters were collected in a deep and extensive lake. I found that no limb was broken, though I had fallen near sixteen feet; and, with some difficulty, again climbed to the path from which I had been precipitated; my head bleeding violently, and my body covered with bruises. I proceeded as speedily as I was able towards the manor-house: on entering the portico, my voice, which was nearly exhausted, brought the family to my assistance; and among the rest, I was glad to recognize the honest North Briton, old Andrew Mac-Gregor. His joy at seeing me was warm and undissembled:—Sir Sidney and Isabella were also unbounded in their greetings.

My wound was closed with bandages, and the effusion of blood stopped. Every person in the household seemed anxious to assist me, and no one was more zealous than my ancient enemy Mrs. Blagden. She lamented the accident, as she termed it, and was at a loss to account for its happening; but her smiles, speciously put on to cover the secret malice of her heart; her sighs, which arose from disappointment more than pity, did not escape the penetrating observation of Sir Sidney Aubrey: his indignation was evident;—it awakened ideas which, till that moment, never entered my mind. I watched his countenance;—it was mysteriously pensive;—a contraction of the brow, with a half smile, the effect of well-founded scepticism, presented an
index

index of his thoughts, while the subtle Mrs. Blagden lamented my misfortune with more than natural sorrow.

I found on my arrival at Glenowen, that the letter which I received at Mr. Randolph's had been sent, by express, to Lady Kencarth's in Hanover-square, from thence dispatched after me to Bath, and forwarded to Bristol by the assiduous attention of my pupil.

I was ushered into Lady Aubrey's apartment, where I found her in a state of health at once so dangerous and extraordinary, that my astonishment was not to be concealed. Her form was wasting rapidly;—her features shrunk, and ghastly;—her mental faculties seemed to partake of the debility of her frame, and she scarcely knew me. At the period when I beheld Lady Aubrey in this dreadful situation, she had been married ten days; during six of which, her painful and alarming symptoms of dissolution had hourly augmented. Mrs. Blagden perpetually attended her; Sir Sidney and Miss Hanbury by turns undertaking the task of midnight watching. I know not why, but as I entered the chamber, the blood seemed to curdle at my heart. I shuddered.—My cousin observed the instinctive sensation, and a deep sigh stole from his breast in unison with my feelings. Mrs. Blagden with upraised eyes put on the semblance of sanctified submission. I inquired for my new relation, Lady Aubrey's juvenile husband;—and was informed that he had on that evening set out for Abergavenny to fetch a physician. I remained near the pillow of Lady Aubrey till the hour arrived when she was to take an opiate, ordered by a village apothecary. I then took my leave, and retired to my chamber; Sir Sidney and Isabella remained with the invalid.

My suspicions being awakened by the attempt on my life, and confirmed by my aunt's extraordinary illness,

illness, I resolved not to undress myself that night, but to keep a vigilant watch on every thing that was passing. The fawning attentions of Mrs. Blagden, the absence of her nephew, and the stern indignation which was visible in Sir Sidney's countenance, convinced my mind that all was not right. The apartment which was destined for me, was at a considerable distance from Lady Aubrey's chamber: I had taken a book from the library more to keep me awake than to amuse me; and a large wood fire being kindled to air the room, which was spacious and lofty, I threw myself into a chair, determined to pass the remainder of the night in watching.

C H A P. XXXVI.

THE house was perfectly still within, but the wind blew shrilly round the outside, as it descended in frequent gusts from the neighbouring mountains. The book which I had chosen to amuse me, was of little service, for the perpetually busy intruder, Thought, prevented my attending to the effusions of fancy, while such mysterious realities demanded my attention. As I contemplated the retrospect of my past life, I found that the prominent events had been in general anticipated by a presentiment, as extraordinary as it was certain. The impression of the moment when I called this circumstance to mind, rather inspired me with a calm and steady resolution, than any anticipation of approaching trials. I opened my book, hurried over a few pages, made two or three turns round the room, arranged my fire, and again, with a vacant eye, read several lines, without knowing the subject or even the words they presented. Finding that books could not divert the mind from the pressure of thought, I laid my volume on the table, and with folded arms began to muse without interruption.

An

An hour passed, and every thing had been tranquil, when a sort of rustling commenced in the gallery which led to my apartment. I concluded that Lady Aubrey was worse, and was taking my light to visit her chamber, when I heard a loud knock at my door. I inquired who was there; but no person answered. I passed into the gallery, but saw nothing. The singularity of the circumstance surprised, but it did not alarm me. I re-entered my chamber, and again listened with increased attention: presently the knock was repeated.—I suddenly rushed towards the door, and on opening it, I perceived a sword lying near the threshold.—I took it up, and returning to my room began to examine it. The blade was nearly cemented to the scabbard by rust, and the hilt, though curiously wrought, was evidently of an ancient fashion. I remembered having seen this antique weapon before; and I also recollected Mr. Hanbury's telling me that it once belonged to Sir Sidney's grandfather.

As I drew the sword from its scabbard, and looked earnestly at the embossed hilt, I perceived the crest of the family. The mysterious manner in which it was left at my door; the silent hour of midnight; and the variety of strange events that had previously occurred, bore marks of suspicion almost amounting to a certainty of danger. I again seated myself by the fire, and during another hour the house was perfectly still.

The waning taper convinced me that morning was rapidly drawing on. I opened my shutters, but there yet appeared no glimpse of day:—the moon was declining behind a mountain, faintly lighting its summit, while every object in the foreground was wholly in obscurity.

By

By slow degrees the solitary hour passed on, and the blue tint of dawn-light at length began to render the scenery faintly visible. Every thing looked melancholy, cold, and dreary. I beheld the leafless branches, which in the glowing season formed a rich and interwoven forest:—I saw a quivering and extensive lake spread over the low ground of the park, which I had left in the verdant garb of summer. I thought that if any thing could reconcile my heart in signing an eternal farewell to my native scenes, it would be the gloomy desolation in which I then beheld them.

Rosalinda,—did not the idea bear some analogy to the general tenor of the human mind?—I thought it did; and my cheek reddened when I reflected, that our affections are too frequently alienated, when cheerless desolation menaces their object.

As soon as it was day I hastened to Lady Aubrey's chamber, first concealing my sword behind the hangings of my bed. I found that Sir Sidney and Isabella were still with my aunt, by whose pillow they had watched ever since I left them. Lady Aubrey had passed a more quiet night than any preceding one since the commencement of her illness: she had slept serenely; her countenance appeared more animated; and, as I approached her bed, she made signs that she knew me. There was something so compunctuous in her upraised eyes, so sorrowful in her looks, that all my resentment ceased, and I could have sacrificed my life at that moment to have accelerated her recovery.

I had not long been in the room when Mrs. Blagden entered:—she glanced round her with a suspicious curiosity, and with a petulant tone, demanded how long I had been there.

Sir

Sir Sidney informed her, that I was that moment come to inquire how my aunt had rested.

"How, indeed!" cried Mrs. Blagden;—"nobody could rest while chamber doors were banging to and fro all night. Some folks are mighty watchful, and mighty fond of meddling with other folks's business;—but I hate inquisitive people, and am always glad when they are disappointed."

I made no answer;—Sir Sidney shook his head sorrowfully, and Mrs. Blagden continued:—

"I wonder that the Doctor is not come. He will set all things to rights, and clear every body that is suspected——"

"Suspected! of what?" said I, eagerly.

Mrs. Blagden reddened like scarlet:—"Why," replied she after some hesitation, "of not taking proper care of your aunt. I am sure I have watched her like a galley slave, so I have, and I get no thanks neither; and since some people thought it necessary to send for those whom Lady Aubrey despises, let them wait upon her. I don't want to be troublesome; I can withdraw whenever my company is irksome. My nephew will take care that I am properly provided for; and I shall turn my back upon Glenowen, without ever wishing to darken its doors again while I am living, God knows!"

"Perhaps it would have been fortunate for the inmates of this mansion if you had never seen it," said I.

"I don't mind that," replied Mrs. Blagden; "I know you are all in league against me; but I'll be even with you—I'll make your hearts ache yet, before I have done with Glenowen. My nephew is Lord here; and you shall all turn out before I will bear such usage."

"For

"For shame, for shame! hold other language," cried Sir Sidney.

"Then order Mr. Ainsforth to be gone," said the duenna; "be grateful for my kindness to you, and remember that you are in my power; I can render you odious to the whole world whenever I choose to take the trouble. As for Mr. Ainsforth, I don't know what business he has here at all, or why he was sent for. Lady Aubrey could not want any body's assistance while I was with her: for the whole universe can tell what a friend I have been to this family, and what a slave I have toiled like all my lifetime."

"I shall not intrude much longer," said I, with a heavy heart: "Heaven knows that all places are alike to me; I do not wish to provoke your malice, or to interfere with Sir Sidney's happiness. 'Life is a voyage, in the progress of which we are perpetually changing our scenes*'; and those that I have witnessed already have been so replete with sorrows, that a deeper sense of misery never can be felt, while the smallest variation will not fail to dispel the glooms which surround me. The darkest, the most stormy night, must yield to the inevitable return of dawn. My mind has long been tempest-beaten by affliction.—The hour of tranquillity must come, either in the solitude of life, or the dark quiet of the grave."

"It must indeed, Walsingham!" cried Sir Sidney; "it shall come; and it will depend on yourself, how far your heart will be capable of receiving happiness as a welcome inmate."

"I cannot even hope for happiness," answered I. "An untroubled state between apathy and resignation may reconcile me to a weary existence;

but the fine sensations never will again be mine. The thin and perishable texture of those nerves, which form the source of sensibility, is broken by the pressure of repeated wrongs ; my heart will neither expand with joy nor shrink at sorrow—it will become an inanimate fountain of mere vitality, from whence the flow of circulation will pass, as the stream wanders through the valley, unconscious that it cherishes all it meets in its flow but never-ceasing progress."

"Can the warmly beating heart so entirely change?" said Isabella.

"It can," answered I ; "all the spells which once held that heart in bondage are now severed. I am at last a thinking being. The stormy passions have settled into the calm of returning reason—pride, insulted pride, has produced the important victory, and I am once more tranquil."

"Then stay, and suffer us to partake of your repose," said Sir Sidney.

"Forgive me," interrupted I ; "but this is a scene of such mysterious suspicion, that I must depart."

"The sooner the better," cried Mrs. Blagden ; "nobody wanted your company ; the house is full enough, without interlopers. You bring nothing but trouble—and you will leave nothing behind you but joy for your absence."

"I shall leave my friendship for Miss Hanbury and Sir Sidney," said I ; "my gratitude to Lady Aubrey for the short period of kindness which cherished my infancy. And you, madam," addressing Mrs. Blagden, "you shall have that place in my memory to which your persevering malice has entitled you."

"You will not leave us, Walsingham?" said Isabella— "you cannot."

"Pardon

"Pardon me, Miss Hanbury," answered I; "but I must quit this scene of enchantment: I know its perils; by long and painful experience I know them! Let me therefore embrace the tranquil interval of reason, and fly from that magic which has too often fascinated and beguiled me."

"With Reason for your monitor, there can be no danger," said Sir Sidney; "you must not think of abandoning my mother in such a situation"

"I must," answered I, after a pause of several moments.

Lady Aubrey suddenly darted her hand towards me, and catching my arm, feebly cried, "Oh, Walsingham! do not, I conjure you do not leave me.—Stay, stay; for my poor Sidney's sorrows will want the sympathy of friendship."

She hesitated—her hand trembled—her voice faltered—she struggled with the strong emotions of her mind, and she so far overcame them, as to continue her intreaties.—

"You shall not go," said she; "I have a world of wonders to disclose.—Heaven!—oh, Heaven forgive me."

Mrs. Blagden shook in every joint—

"Lady Aubrey is delirious!" said she with a countenance of dissembled sorrow; "she knows not what she says. Lord have mercy upon us! this is dismal work indeed! you had better leave her."

My aunt started up in her bed: "Oh! not with Mrs. Blagden," said she; "for pity's sake do not leave me to her mercy. The hour of repentance is come; and my anguish is unutterable. Colonel Aubrey—"

She could not proceed.

"What of him?" said I, eagerly.

She waved her hand—but her strength was exhausted, and she had not power to speak. Sir Sid-

ney

ney hid his face on his mother's pillow—Miss Hambury burst into tears, while Mrs. Blagden, with a ghastly smile, muttered revenge. The latter shortly after quitted the room—My cousin, with Isabella, promised to remain incessantly with Lady Aubrey, while I went to the parsonage in search of Mr. Hambury, with the hope that I should be able to explain those events which, during our separation, had prejudiced him against me.

I was again obliged to traverse the narrow path that wound along the side of the acclivity from which I had been precipitated the preceding evening.—The marks which my feet had made on the rough slope were still visible, and I was at a loss to account for the singularity of the adventure. The dreary scene lost nothing of its impressive sadness by the return of day-light.—The cold dim sky of a winter morning reflected in the wide lake, half frozen over, and the leafless branches incrustated with a white frost, were strikingly contrasted by the black vegetation which cloathed the adjacent mountains, still more than half concealed by the thin blue vapours which floated round them.

I stopped to contemplate the scene.—Every source of painful, fond remembrance still presented itself, though changed and robbed of all its original attractions. The parsonage was entirely covered with the stems of vines which in my youth I had planted. The church of Glenowen had been recently embellished, and its newly whitened walls added, I thought, a chilling coldness to the landscape. Notwithstanding the season, and the mournful aspect of every object before me, I could not help feeling a sort of melancholy pleasure, when I reflected that fate had once more permitted me to behold my native mountains.

The conversation which had passed that morning at the manor-house now recurred to my memory ;
and

and a wish faintly stole across my mind that Sir Sidney and Isabella might renew their invitation. The dreary ravages of winter, thought I, will pass away, and renovated nature will again bloom, amidst her vast variety of splendours. The woods will bend beneath their weight of foliage—the mountains glow with summer radiance—the birds enliven the most sequestered shades with their wild melodies—and I shall not witness the beauties of my native solitude ! I sighed—“ I will remain at Glenowen,” said I—for Fancy whispered that I had been making a long journey, during which I had encountered many difficulties ; that the busy, the fatiguing changes of every lingering hour were past ; and I returned to that peaceful asylum, where toil and sorrow were destined to repose in safety. My opinion of attraction, originating in instinct and cherished by nature, is perhaps romantic ; but it has ever been the pleasure of my most melancholy moments to look with Fancy’s fascinated eye towards

MY NATIVE HOME.

O’er breezy hill or woodland glade,
At morning’s dawn or closing day,
In summer’s flaunting pomp array’d,
Or pensive moonlight’s silver grey,
The wretch in sadness still shall roam,
Who wanders from his Native Home.

While, at the foot of some old tree,
As meditation soothes his mind,
Lull’d by the hum of wand’ring bee,
Or rippling stream, or whispering wind,
His vagrant fancy still shall roam,
And lead him to his Native Home.

Though Love a fragrant couch may weave,
And Fortune heap the festive board,
Still Mem’ry oft would turn to grieve,
And Reason scorn the splendid hoard,
While he, beneath the proudest dome,
Would languish for his Native Home.

To him the rusky roof is dear,
 And sweetly calm the darkest glen ;
 While Pomp, and Pride, and Pow'r appear,
 At best, the glitt'ring plagues of men ;
 Unsought by those that never roam
 Forgetful of their Native Home.

Let me to summer shades retire,
 With Meditation and the Muse !
 Or round the social winter fire,
 The glow of temper'd mirth diffuse ;
 Tho' winds may howl and waters foam,
 I still shall bless my Native Home.

And oh ! when Youth's ecxtatic hour,
 And Passion's glowing noon are past ;
 Should age behold the tempest low'r,
 And Sorrow blow its keenest blast ;
 My shade, no longer doom'd to roam,
 Shall find the GRAVE a PEACEFUL HOME.

C H A P. XXXVII.

WHEN I entered the garden of the parsonage-house, I stopped to collect my shattered resolution, and the first object that met my sight was the bower which I had made for Isabella : it was nearly destroyed by the wintry wind ; the hoops which supported the leafy canopy in the season of vegetation, were broken, and only held together by the interwoven twigs, which time had rendered strong and numberless. I was obliged to pass quite close to this once dear retreat, and my eyes involuntarily turned towards it : I beheld the rude bench where I had beguiled many a studious hour. It was notched and carved in various devices ; among others, the name of Isabella was distinguishable in every direction. I placed my hand before my eyes, paused a moment, and then, endeavouring to shake off the phantoms which memory was rapidly gathering round me, hurried towards the parsonage.

I entered the little parlour in which, sleeping on my bed of hay, Lady Aubrey first found me.

Vol. II.

M

“ Pshaw !

"Pshaw!" cried I, with a mixture of impatience and regret, "why will these things occur to my mind at such a moment?" Finding nobody in the lower rooms, I ascended to my chamber. I contemplated every trifling object with an interest that made me shiver. The casement, from which I had so often watched for Isabella, had demanded several minutes of fixed attention, when a servant girl entered the room. At the sight of a stranger she started, and her cheek grew red. I relieved her from the astonishment that was visible in her countenance, by inquiring for Mr. Hanbury.

"He is con away," cried the little mountaineer. "He has tacken a long journey, Cot pless him."

"A journey!—whither?" said I earnestly.

"To Pristol," answered she, curtesying; "to perry his rich relation. The news camed this morning, and my master was sorely grief'd when he heard of it; for, Cot preserve him, he has a coot heart as effer man had, and those that do him wrong will surely go to the tivil."

"I hope that Mr. Randolph is not dead?" said I, scarcely able to utter the words.

"Troth, and that he is; as ted as a stone, poor coot man. He has left my master plenty of riches, and, Cot knows, he desarves it; for he has pin very sad and sick of late, and, in coot troth, I was afeard he would die, and go to Cot a-mighty, pefore my Lady Auprey was con to the tivil."

"Mr. Randolph dead!" said I, unable to stir from the spot where I then stood.

"And, I pray you, why are you so grief'd?" cried the Welsh servant. "No coot comes of sorrow, when one can't mend it by criffin?"

"Oh God! when will my anguish cease!" exclaimed I. "When will thy chastening hand arreft the scourge of justice, and consign my aching bosom to the silence of the grave?"

I quitted

I quitted the parsonage, and, with a mind labouring to resist its new source of affliction, returned as speedily as possible to Glenowen.

As soon as I entered the manor-house, I hastened to Lady Aubrey's apartment ;—she was sleeping. I beckoned Isabella, and she followed me into the gallery. After some preparatory hints, I revealed the melancholy tidings :—she wept abundantly. “ Forgive me, Walsingham,” said she, “ if I shed tears at an event which renders you independent of all your enemies : I know that Mr. Randolph's fortune will be divided between us. He was rich, and I trust that you will yet be happy.”

I recollected the scene of Mrs. Aubrey's death ;—my brain seemed to shrink with horror. Miss Hanbury was yet a stranger to the fate of Amelia, and I had not courage to reveal it.

On my return to Lady Aubrey's room, I found Mrs. Blagden sitting by her pillow. Her countenance convinced me that she knew the cause of my distress, and Isabella's tears. “ You were in a mighty great hurry to take yourself off,” said she. “ Had you treated me with a little more civility, I should have given you a letter, which Mr. Hanbury sent to the manor-house early in the morning. But some folks are so haughty, and hold their heads so high, that one is afraid to approach them.”

“ A letter !” said I ; “ give it me quickly.”

“ I hardly know what I have done with it.” replied Mrs. Blagden, looking round the room. “ But it is of little consequence ; he has not left you a shilling, I dare say. Your scandalous goings on have long since lost you his regard, and now you must thank yourself if you die a beggar.”

She now produced the letter from her pocket : the seal had evidently been broken. It was from Mr. Hanbury, who had just heard of my arrival, informing me of Mr. Randolph's death and desir-

ing me to come to the parsonage without delay, as he was, in a few minutes, going to set off for Bristol."

"When did this letter arrive?" said I.

"Soon after day-break" replied Mrs. Blagden. "But you was in such a cursed ill-humour, that I did not think of it till this moment."

"And how did you know the nature of its contents?" said I.

Mrs. Blagden's cheek became crimson. "Why, I guessed it," replied she.

"Oh monster!—monster of cunning and deceit!" exclaimed I.

She hurried out of the room with a determined sneer, which left no doubt of her treacherous conduct. Lady Aubrey was awakened by the violence with which the door was closed; and Sir Sidney conjuring me not to mention Mr. Randolph's death, left it should overpower his mother, I sat myself down to brood in silence over my increased affliction.

The day passed, and my aunt continued dangerously ill; no news arrived, either of the physician or Edward Blagden. The symptoms of malady increased every hour, and every heart ached for the sufferer, except the marble seat of malice and revenge, which was hidden in the breast of the infernal Judith. As night approached, Sir Sidney became almost frantic. Lady Aubrey was still sensible; and, on Mrs. Blagden's quitting her chamber for a few minutes, she called me to her bed-side. "Walsingham," said she, in a low and faltering voice, "perhaps, by the return of day, my wretched eyes will close for ever. In a small closet beyond the *boudoir*, adjoining my dressing-room, you will find an ivory cabinet. Mrs. Blagden knows not of it, she supposes the treasure which it holds destroyed:—it is your's when I am gone. All I solicit is, that while I am yet permitted to prolong my miserable hour

hour on this side the grave, you will forbear to examine its contents. Forgive me, Walsingham—forgive the weak and erring mortal, who, while the pang of death clings round her tortured heart, confesses her own unworthiness.”

Sir Sidney fell upon his mother's bed, and wept like an infant. I had not power to make any answer. Lady Aubrey pressed my hand: Mrs. Blagden returned; and I, after dispatching a second messenger for a physician, retired to my chamber.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

AGAIN obliged to pass a night of solitary watching, I arranged my fire, and threw myself on my bed to rest my limbs, though my mind had little chance of repose. The loss of Mr. Randolph afflicted me deeply; and I lamented it the more, when I reflected that the event of Mrs. Aubrey's death had occasioned him to think, however justly, unfavourably of me. The approaching dissolution of Lady Aubrey did not fail to augment the melancholy prospects which crowded rapidly on my thoughts; while the mystery, which seemed to involve every part of the family history, placed divination beyond the powers of reason. The house, as on the preceding night, was perfectly quiet soon after I entered my chamber. The weather was serene, and the awful stillness which seemed to await the repose of nature, served rather to increase than to divert the mind from gloomy meditation.

Finding it was impossible to close my eyes, while my senses were all awake to rumination. I quitted my position, and began to traverse my chamber, as I had done during the preceding midnight. The recollection of the scenery from my window induced me to open my shutter, and to indulge once more that soothing sadness, which is affliction's mildest remedy.

dy. The whole aspect of the country was different from what I had last seen it. The moon shone brightly clear, and its beams were nearly vertical; the lake was rendered a solid body by a sharp frost, and the sky presented one vast concave of deep grey, except where the moon spread a wide ring of light, to a considerable distance from the luminous orb within its circle.

A scene more solemnly tranquil never met the eye of contemplation: my mind was soothed more than depressed by the objects before me; and I sat at the window near an hour, with my eyes fixed on the vaulted arch of boundless extent, where fancy might wander till frenzy arrested the career of ineffectual thought. The night air chilled me, and I returned to the fire-side, where I wrote the following

S O N N E T.

'Tis NIGHT's dull reign!—The silver-mantled queen
Sails on her ether throne through boundless air;
Her paly lamp, which trembles o'er the scene,
Befits the sullen sadness of despair.
The owl, her minstrel, on the leafless spray
Shrieks to the cutting blast; while spectres roam,
Loathing their silent graves, till morning's ray
Warms the wan phantoms to their beamless home.
Yon mountain's brow, like the gigantic woe
Which shadows my torn breast, with tow'ring shade
Frowns on the desolated vale below—
Spreading impervious darkness o'er the glade:
For these again returning Spring shall bloom,
While Misery's child shall prove Despair's eternal gloom.

Again I returned to the window, where I had taken my seat only a few minutes, when a knock roused me from my reverie of sadness. I instantly darted towards the door, and hastily opening it, found my old favourite, Andrew, waiting for admittance. With a melancholy countenance he approached me: I inquired what brought him thither at so
unsea-

unseasonable an hour?—He closed the door, and advancing towards the fire, after a short pause, replied —“ Gude troth, au is not weel, lad; the deevil’s emps are broke lose among the mountains, and the auld Blagden at the hede o’em. ‘Tis na my business to tack pairt we the wecked, an I come to warn ye, lad, of your danger.”

“ My danger!” repeated I. “ What do you mean?—explain your words briefly, I conjure you.”

“ Why,” answered Andrew; “ did ye na ken an auld rusty sword that I left at your door last night?”

“ I have it. For what reason did you leave it ?” said I.

“ Gude troth, an I left it, to arm you against your enemies,” replied Andrew; “ and you have mickle want o’ sic a weapon, while ye tak up your residence in a hoose of Lady Aubrey’s. I should be laith to scandalize any honest person, lad; for the murrain take the promoter of conteension.

“ Well, be brief, good Andrew,” interrupted I.

“ Why, then, I’ll e’en teel you au I ken o’ th business,” said he. “ The saucy loon, who has made himself laird o’ Glenowen, is na gane to fetch a doctor; for, if I be living, I saw the raegamuffin only yester-night, an I followed him to the wee tenement at the fare end o’ th hamelet.”

“ Are you certain that your conjectures are well-founded ?” said I.

“ As certain as that I belong to the clan of the Mac-Gregors,” replied Andrew. “ O the de’il tak the ill-spoken lout. I ken him weel when I meet him; but he was mickle shy o’ me, lad:—an I had him i th Highlands, I’d ge him as gude a dreeßing as ever braw Scot geed to an enemy.”

“ At what hour did you see him ?” said I.

“ Just before I brought the auld weapon for you to deseend yoursel, my bonie lad,” replied Andrew.

" I watched him till a took shelter at the sign o'th Welsh deer at the bottom o'th hamelet."

" At the goat?"

" A, that's the hoose; an I'll wager my mull against a poond of lawful money, that, an you have a mind, you may unkennel the fox before day-light. By my troth, an I shanna be backward in carrying a dirk in a gude cause. The Mac-Gregors be na given to cauld heartedness, when an honest lad has got into the claws o'th deevil."

As he spoke we heard the creaking of shoes along the gallery. " Hearken!" cried Andrew; " did ye hear nathing?"

" I did;—but it might have been the wind through this spacious building," said I.

" Nae, 'twas na the wind; but 'twas the witch that rides in't" replied Andrew. " I ken the step o'th hagard—saying your presence—as well as I ken the cloven foot of the auld one."

" Well, never fear," said I.

" Fear!—Gad's blude! was there ever a Mac-Gregor that was given to fear?—An you ken the battles o' Flouden and Dumblain, you'll find the whole clan as brave as lions, and as——Hearken, did ye na hear something?"

" Nothing, my good fellow," said I.

" An there was one of my ancestors," continued he, patting his leathern snuff-box, " that was found we fifty gude stabs through his bonnet, and as many in his heart; an a never quitted his clan for aw that, lad—till deeth put an end to his valour, and left nathing but his fame to prove his legeitimacy. Now, as for this auld deevil——Did you hear nathing in the gallery?"

" I thought I heard footsteps," said I; therefore be brief."

" Gude troth, an I'll tell you au I know when we meet again," said Andrew. " It winna be long, for
I have

I have mickle news to tell ye; an au about auld Mestrefs Blageden. I should be laith to breed any ill blude i'th famely, till I have packed up my alls and am jogging for the Highlands."

At this moment my door was shook nearly off the hinges: Andrew turned pale.—I could not help smiling.

"'Tis either a witch, or the deevil, or auld mestrefs——"

Again he was interrupted by a loud blow on the wainscot.

"We'll talk o'this another time," cried the honest Scot; "maire hears than prudence ought to inform. Down i'th glen, near the wee gate which leads to the hamelet, I'll watch for you in about an hour. Do'na fail to come, an you wish to be guarded against your enemy."

Andrew opened the chamber-door, and, after peeping out to reconnoitre the enemy's post, stole on tip-toe up the stairs to his apartment, leaving me more bewildered than ever.

Day-light soon appeared, and I hastened to the place of appointment; eager to know the meaning of old Andrew's caution, so frequently repeated. I waited a considerable time, but no person came to satisfy my curiosity. I strolled to and fro from the glen to the village, passing the little gate at every turn, and listening with eager inquietude. I had taken the rusty sword under my great coat, and the scene being solitary, I fell into profound meditation, almost forgetting the place, and the motive that led me to it.

I had passed more than an hour at this lonely spot, when Andrew came running towards me. His countenance was expressive of stern indignation, and his manner more alert than I had ever before seen it. I hastened to meet him; he was out of breath with the rage of his bosom, and the expedition of his

feet. He entered the glen, and seating himself on the root of an old tree, began to unfold the trouble of his mind in all the bitterness of wounded pride, and all the scorn of dignified resentment.

I found that Mrs. Blagden had dismissed him from the service of Lady Aubrey, and that, with such degrading epithets as the pride of a Mac-Gregor could not tamely endure. No reason was given for the sudden resentment of the tyrannical duenna, except that he was too apt to meddle with the private concerns of the family.

Andrew's agitation and evident distress affected my feelings. I considered myself in a great measure as accessory to his degradation; I attributed his being discharged from Lady Aubrey's service to the visit he had paid me on the preceding night, and the conversation that had taken place respecting Edward Blagden; while my regret was only to be equalled by the high opinion I entertained of his honesty.

My sorrow was infinite while I reflected that another object had been destined to suffer for an attachment to me and to my fortune. The kind-hearted Andrew wept tears of indignation; and while he execrated the malice of his enemy, he rejoiced in having warned me to be guarded against mine.

"I winna leave you, lad," cried he. "I'll find a habitation at the hamelet, and watch ye weel, til the sculking loon is brought to shame; and then I'll e'en jog bock to the Highlands. I canna come to more disgrace than to be cau'd a traetor—an auld, gude-for-nathing, pemping, begarly, oat-meal vagabond! The de'il tak the Jeczable an' a' the clan o'em! I'd rather peck theestles an' my days than wear the badge o' servitude we sic an auld Scareamouch."

"Be not too hasty, my good Andrew," said I;
Mrs.

"Mrs. Blagden will not always be the tyrant of Glenowen. But where is the sign of the 'Welsh Deer,' which you mentioned as the place of her nephew's concealment?"

Andrew rose abruptly from his seat, and bidding me follow, hastened down the village. When we came to a small public-house, that had been opened since I had quitted Glenowen, I observed the Goat which was painted over the door, as an invitation to travellers. We entered and inquired after the landlord—he was not at home; I then demanded whether Mr. Blagden had been there during the last two days: I was informed that he had called for a moment, but his horse was kept in waiting, and he departed speedily.

"For what did he call?" said I.

"To bathe his arm, which was sprained, so as to become intolerably painful," replied the servant girl.

"Why did he not apply for assistance at Glenowen?" said I.

"The young 'squire said that he was afraid of alarming my lady," answered the girl.

"And how came he to sprain his arm?" said I, continuing the conversation.

"By opening the park-gate on horse-back."

"Had he no servant with him?"

"No; 'squire always rides alone about the manor."

"When do you expect the landlord to return?" said I.

"Not this fortnight.—He is gone to Hereford to buy cattle for 'Squire Blagden."

"Your master's name?"

"Davy Apprece, your honour."

Finding no chance of obtaining any satisfactory information from the simple girl, I walked with

Andrew

Andrew as far as the parsonage, where I left him, and returned to the manor-house to inquire the cause of his being so suddenly discarded.

C H A P. XXXIX.

I FOUND that during my absence the physician had arrived. He was with Lady Aubrey when I entered her chamber, and, by his looks, I perceived that her situation was as dangerous as I had before thought it. After giving directions for the treatment of his patient, and dispatching a servant with a prescription, he quitted the room. Sir Sidney with myself followed him to the saloon. Isabella, by a whisper from me, continued with Lady Aubrey; Mrs. Blagden stood sullenly dissatisfied during the physician's visit; and the scene of mystery seemed opening to a speedy elucidation.

We entered the saloon, and the door was closed. The physician's features were settled by deep and fearful rumination.—He trembled to disclose that which he dared not keep a secret; I construed his lowering brow and hesitating manner, while they unfolded a page of infamy that made every nerve thrill with anticipated horrors.

I inquired whether Lady Aubrey was in any danger—he shook his head——“She may survive it,” said he with impressive regret; “but the chance scarcely amounts to probability; the symptoms are of an alarming nature—their origin unquestionably—poison.”

Sir Sidney leaned upon my arm, and seemed to lose the power of utterance—his face was pale, and every limb shook convulsively: my situation was little better. The physician looked earnestly at each by turns, and addressing Sir Sidney, continued—

“How or for what purpose it has been administered, Heaven only knows! But I think it my duty
to

to apprise you of Lady Aubrey's state, and of the means by which she is reduced to such imminent danger. The circumstance might have been accidental. Had the aid of medical skill been procured at an earlier period, the fatal consequences might have been prevented."

"Were you not requested by Mr. Blagden to visit Lady Aubrey?" said I.

"Never," replied the physician.

"Stay, I conjure you, stay with my mother," cried Sir Sidney: "This dreadful business must be investigated. A parent's life, the reputation of innocence, and the punishment of guilt, are objects of too much importance to let the energy of justice slacken in inquiry."

"God forbid that I should charge any person with the crime of premeditated murder!" said the physician.

Sir Sidney's agitation was ungovernable—he conjured me to search the deep and horrible attempt even to the most minute circumstance.

"I did—I do suspect," said he, "an infamous concerted plan to destroy my mother; but the suspicion was of such a nature, that, circumstanced as I am, it might have been placed to the account of malice."

I urged the propriety of keeping our awakened vigilance as secret as possible. By any sudden shew of apprehension we should have afforded the criminal time to escape, and the enormity of the deed would perhaps have attached itself to an innocent object.

The physician remained with Lady Aubrey; Sir Sidney and Isabella sat up in her chamber, and Mrs. Blagden kept close in her own apartment. I walked up and down the long gallery during a great part of the night, musing, and at the same time dreading to inquire whenever the smallest noise was heard in the

the house : it was an epoch of horrors. The silence of the hour—the idea that Lady Aubrey's situation was occasioned by a domestic assassin, the worst of murderers—the story repeated by old Andrew—and the mystery of Sir Sidney's birth—occupied my thoughts, and bewildered them almost to madness. The crime of attempting Lady Aubrey's life seemed to rest between Mrs. Blagden and her nephew, Edward ; which to accuse, or whether to charge both with its enormity, puzzled and perplexed me. I resolved, however, on the following day, to make some effort which should either authorise my suspicions, or exonerate the objects of them.

While I was with slow and cautious steps traversing the gallery, I heard at intervals deep and smothered groans, which, by their repetition, at length fascinated my attention. I stopped at the door of Lady Aubrey's chamber, and listened :—all within was as still as death. I again walked to the farther end of the gallery, and again the murmur of stifled agony fixed me to the spot. I entered my chamber, and opening the window, listened several minutes ; the only sound that met my ear was the low whisperings of the wind among the leafless branches of the adjacent wood. While I was contemplating the moon-light solitude, I perceived something come forth from among the trees, and advance towards the manor-house. I drew back, still keeping my eyes fixed on the person, though concealing myself from his observation. He paced to and fro : I could only indistinctly see his figure, without being able to judge of his age, dress, or features.

After observing him some time, I armed myself with the ancient sword which Andrew had left at my chamber door, and was again proceeding along the gallery, when I heard several words inarticulately uttered in a tone of agony. I stopped :—the sound came from an apartment on the second story ; a private

vate stair-case led to it, and with caution I ascended. I now heard footsteps very distinctly, and the exclamation—" Oh God " frequently and emphatically repeated. Perceiving a light under the door, I ventured to try the lock, and it opened. The object who had excited my curiosity was Mrs Blagden !—she was pale, and her eyes appeared swollen with tears. She started at seeing me, and, for a moment, seemed bewildered with amazement ; but the natural and prompt malevolence of her heart quickly suggested the means of revenge. She seized me by the collar, and began to shriek, while she vociferated, ' Murder ! ' till the whole mansion echoed with the sound. The chamber was, in a few minutes, a scene of universal consternation. Mrs. Blagden held me firmly, and I was too much astonished to think of escaping. She protested with the most awful and solemn oaths, that I had concealed myself in her chamber to destroy her ; and the sword, which was found upon me, seemed to corroborate her asseverations.

Sir Sidney was overwhelmed with horror : Isabella wept, and lamented my rash conduct. The domestics united in execrating the enormity of the attempt, and Mrs. Blagden persisted in the accusation. " Fly ! " exclaimed she ; " oh fly, and procure some means to punish the villain !—the assassin !—the vile wretch !—who has long sought my life, and whose crimes deserve the justice of his Maker."

I was almost petrified with horror ;—I could only articulate— " This sword was given to me by honest old Andrew ; it was merely meant for my own defence."

" Against whom ? " was the unanimous question.

" I know not," said I. " Send for Andrew, and let his evidence acquit me of the infamous charge alledged against me."

This

This assertion, instead of influencing my hearers in my favour, seemed a strong confirmation of guilt. Andrew had been dismissed from Lady Aubrey's service by Mrs. Blagden, and my bringing him as an evidence in my favour, conveyed an idea that he was an accomplice in the plan to destroy his enemy. Mrs. Blagden knew that a dark cloud of suspicion hung over her, and that the more she endeavoured to blacken my name with supposed criminality, the less my evidence against her would be credited in an hour of investigation.

A messenger was dispatched to find old Andrew. I was now left alone with Sir Sidney and Isabella; their grief was scarcely utterable. They conjured me to make my escape, and not to brave the vindictive spirit which I had roused to vengeance against me. I protested my innocence; informed them how and when I had received the sword, with all the particular circumstances which Andrew had related. "Alas, Walsingham!" exclaimed Sir Sidney, "I wish to believe that you are innocent—I think you are; but the enemy you have to encounter is powerfully malevolent:—appearances are strongly against you, and, if you remain here, the consequences may prove fatal."

"If I depart, it will seem a confirmation of my supposed guilt," said I.

"Events may place Mrs. Blagden in a point of view that will, perhaps, acquit you," cried Isabella.

"Then I must await that period," said I firmly: "I have too long been the victim of appearances; it is time that the sombre shadow should be dissolved by the penetrating rays of truth; life has been a weary journey, and the sooner it is over the better. Send for an officer of justice—I demand a fair investigation of my conduct; I also insist that Mrs. Blagden be detained."

detained on suspicion of having poisoned Lady Aubrey."

Sir Sidney started, and trembled convulsively.—
 "Almighty God!" exclaimed he, clasping his hands and raising his eyes towards Heaven, "What a moment is this!"

I now rung the bell—Sir Sidney closed the door and locked it.

"Walsingham, yet stay an instant," said he: "do not irritate the serpent whose sting will either annihilate my mother, or separate me from her in so perilous a situation; for my sake be patient; you know not the danger of provoking Mrs. Blagden. My dear but misguided parent may yet recover; she may live to render justice, to know the malice of her tyrant, and to repent of that fatal confidence which has produced these dreadful consequences. Would you, if it is Lady Aubrey's destiny to perish, embitter her last moments by the conviction that I am a vile, forsworn, deceitful monster?"

There was something so painfully energetic in Sir Sidney's voice and manner, that I was unable to answer him.

"Follow your cousin's counsel, I conjure you," said Isabella; "whatever you may suspect Mrs. Blagden as capable of committing, I do not think that she is guilty respecting Lady Aubrey. The absence of her nephew leaves but too dark an evidence of his criminal intentions."

A confused noise interrupted the conversation; it seemed to issue from the wood near the manor-house. I approached the window, and perceived a large throng hastening through the park towards the portico. Sir Sidney rushed out of the chamber, and Isabella fell senseless on the ground before me.

I soon discovered that the crowd, amounting to more than sixty persons, was composed of the peasantry in the neighbourhood of Glenowen. Mrs. Blagden

Blagden had dispatched several domestics, in all directions, to alarm the country; and to report that I had attempted her life, and poisoned Lady Aubrey. The indignation of the rustics was fermented almost to frenzy;—they demanded the horrible delinquent, and menaced annihilation in ways as numberless as they supposed the crimes of the object which excited their revengeful purpose.

Sir Sidney expostulated with the enraged multitude from the steps of the portico. Their clamorous demands reached my aunt's chamber, and overwhelmed with terror, she fainted. Mrs. Blagden availed herself of this event; and, from the window, declared that Lady Aubrey was expiring. Sir Sidney was instantly overpowered; the people rushed into the hall, and, in a few moments, several of the most determined entered Lady Aubrey's chamber. Her death-like countenance, the shrieks and lamentations of Mrs. Blagden, Isabella's trembling form at the same moment feebly advancing along the gallery, and my horror-stricken features, seemed the incontrovertible evidences of a crime, at which my soul shuddered, while my tongue lost the power of pleading its innocence. I was instantly seized, my arms bound with cords, and, amidst the curses of the credulous rustics, conducted to the village till a chaise could be procured for my conveyance to Aber-gavenny.

C H A P. XL.

THE little Welch girl at the parsonage had made a bed for old Andrew, and he passed the night considerably soothed by the good humour and humanity of his evening associate. The messenger which I had sent, soon returned with my trusty friend, who fully confirmed all that I said in my defence respecting the sword, and the conduct of Edward Blagden. My
vin-

vindictive accuser, notwithstanding, demanded justice, and the incensed throng still seemed sceptical as to the defence which I made, and which Andrew vehemently corroborated. All would not do:—the multitude insisted on my departure, and every expostulation having failed to convince them, I at length consented to their wishes.

During our journey towards Abergavenny, the concourse of people augmented every mile, and, by the time that we appeared before the justice of the peace, some hundreds of persons were collected to witness the important examination. Upon a strict inquiry it was discovered, that there was not sufficient ground for my commitment to the county gaol; the mere assertion of Mrs. Blagden could not criminate me, and the fate of Lady Aubrey being yet undecided, I was permitted to return to Glenowen, after Andrew had made oath that her dangerous symptoms commenced previous to my arrival.

The tide of resentment now turned against Mrs. Blagden and her nephew. Every tongue was clamorously loud in menaces, and every mind impressed with sorrow for the injustice of my accusation. Old Andrew, notwithstanding the affronts offered to the dignity of his family, resolved on returning with me to Glenowen; on braving the wordy storm of his furious antagonist, and on assisting me in bringing to justice the assassins of Lady Aubrey. We travelled with all possible expedition. On our arrival at the manor-house, we were met by Sir Sidney and Isabella; the former embraced me with the ardour of a friend, and the latter wept tears of joy, that recompensed me for all my sufferings. The physician was still with Lady Aubrey; she was considerably better. The event which had happened to me had been concealed from her knowledge, and Mrs. Blagden had never quitted her own apartment during my absence.

I again

I again had a private interview with Sir Sidney and Isabella : I conjured them to take such steps as should bring those monsters to punishment who had attempted the destruction of Lady Aubrey. Still my cousin shuddered at the idea :—his agitation was terrible. He uttered every epithet in abhorrence of the vile perpetrators of an act so atrocious, and yet he had not resolution to investigate the mystery. His manner seemed to convey an embarrassment wholly abstracted from the present source of inquietude, and the dread of injuring Lady Aubrey predominated over that justice which was due to the enemies who had sought to destroy her. I could not form the slightest conjecture of my cousin's extraordinary motive : every word which I uttered, to enforce conviction of what I thought his duty towards a suffering parent, only augmented his perturbation. His grief seemed undissembled ; his abhorrence of the deed, such as evinced the genuine humanity and filial affection of his heart. But there was yet a stronger, darker spell, which chained his tongue in silence, and which baffled the efforts of conjecture, while they palsied the hand of justice.

My honest friend Andrew remained at the parsonage. I was resolved to await the fate of Lady Aubrey, to investigate the cause of her illness, and then to quit Glenowen, however painful such a step might be to the feelings of my heart, for ever. Another night passed, and no ray of light yet elucidated the mystery. On the following day, Sir Sidney was unable to quit his chamber ; the fatigue of watching, and the perpetual anxiety of his mind, produced a fever, and the physician began to apprehend the most fatal consequences. Orders were given that no person should see him except Lady Aubrey ; and the
manor.

manor-house was more completely a scene of sorrow than ever.

My mind, with a painful accuracy, revolved over all the scenes of past inquietude in which Sir Sidney had been the main spring of action. I recollected the wild, yet noble eccentricities of his youth—his liberal conduct towards Colonel Aubrey—his kind, his unaltered friendship for me—and his filial virtues, which prompted a mild and graceful forbearance under the rigor of maternal severity. Now that he was in danger of perishing, the victim of duty and sensibility, I beheld with an unprejudiced eye, his many and distinguished perfections; all the jealousy of my heart respecting Miss Hanbury had been effaced as its aching fibres resisted and subdued the enthusiasm of affection. Friendship began to build a pure and sacred basis on the wrecks of a mistaken passion, while the delirium of the senses was lulled by the soothing return of reason.

Lady Aubrey recovered hourly, while Sir Sidney's fever increased till the most serious apprehensions filled every bosom except that of Mrs. Blagden. The same torpid indifference, the same hardened inhumanity—the horrible characteristics of a sordid barbarous mind—were evinced, as during the recent peril to which Lady Aubrey had been exposed, for motives which yet remained secret and undefinable. I passed my nights in the most painful inquietude. My aunt, who had recovered sufficient strength to sit up in Sir Sidney's chamber during the day, was in a state of mind bordering on despair. Mrs. Blagden, in the routine of her occupations, frequently met me; but a sneer of hatred, or a malignant glance, was the only notice she bestowed; while I, with calm and well-founded contempt, neither shrunk at the one, nor paid attention to the other.

Adjoining

Adjoining to Sir Sidney's chamber was a small *boudoir*. The physician had positively commanded that no person except Lady Aubrey should be admitted to his patient during the crisis of a fever which hourly augmented, and which presented symptoms of the most dreadful nature. In this *boudoir* I had passed two nights, watching with trembling apprehensions, and dreading every moment to hear the last sigh of the generous and noble Sidney. Mrs. Blagden would frequently enter for a moment, and as suddenly depart; always bestowing some horrid execration on my devoted head, and menacing vengeance on all those whom she termed her enemies. Lady Aubrey never quitted the chamber of Sir Sidney, night nor day. A sofa was placed near his bed, and her attentions, mingled with agonizing sorrow, were unremitting.

On the third day of my cousin's illness, I received a message from old Andrew, requesting that I would without delay repair to the parsonage. I obeyed the summons, and at the close of evening, met him hastening through the churchyard to bring me a letter which had been sent by express from Mr. Hanbury. We returned to the parsonage, and, with a trembling hand, I broke the seal. Andrew would have prevented my reading the contents, and entreated that I would suffer my spirits to become more tranquil before I ventured to encounter a new trial. I closed the letter—paused a few moments—anticipated a confirmation of the fatal intelligence which had been communicated by the Welch girl—and concluded that Mr. Randolph's just resentment had wholly precluded me from any friendly wish in his last moments.

Andrew perceived the perturbation of my mind, and, snatching the letter from my hand, exclaimed—"By my soul, but you are as teemed as a woman.

man. Ge me the paper, lad, and I'll tell ye au it contains : for I should be laith to see ye make a loon o'yourself, and forget the deegnity of manhood by whempering like a baby. The de'il a bit are you worthy to be the friend of a Mac-Gregor, if you canna bear the brunt o'misfortune, as well as the sunshine of prosperity. Wha can pretend to be faint-hearted, when they see the honour o'my famely blurred by the habit of a sarving loon ? In gude troth, I am the first of my clan that ever disgraced his blude by wearing a levery."

As he pronounced these words he shed tears, which, in spite of all his efforts to suppress them, gave a contradiction to his words, while they evinced the gentleness of his nature.

After several minutes past in serious and painful reflection, again I ventured to open Mr. Hanbury's letter. It was hastily written. and contained only a few lines ; stating, that, in consequence of Colonel Aubrey's earnest solicitations, Mr. Randolph, in his last moments, had forbore to alter his will, by which he had bequeathed the whole of his property, amounting to forty thousand pounds, "to be equally divided between Isabella Hanbury and Walsingham Ainsforth."

The letter dropped from my hand ;—I had not power to speak. Such unexampled generosity to one whose conduct had forfeited every claim to his esteem, made a deeper impression on my mind than any act of persecution could have done. Indeed, Rosanna, so sensible was I of my own unworthiness, that I almost wished his rigour had been equal to my rashness ; for the spring of compunction never fails to flow when the source is touched by the power of generosity.

Andrew, after an effort which I could scarcely summon resolution to make, heard me read Mr. Hanbury's

bury's letter. When I came to that part which informed me of the last liberal action of a life which had uniformly done honour to humanity, the venerable servant burst into tears :—I could not proceed. "Take the letter and finish it thyself, my good Andrew," said I; "and when thou hast given vent to the sympathy of thy feeling heart, follow me to the manor-house. I will make thy peace with Lady Aubrey, and time will awaken thy enemy to compunction for the injustice of her conduct."

I hastened home, little exhilarated by the acquisition which my fortune had experienced, though deeply depressed by the anguish which I felt for the loss of such a patron as Mr. Randolph. As I approached the manor-house, I perceived a carriage waiting at the portico, with a courier and two servants on horseback. On a closer view, I found that they wore the livery of Lord Ken-carth. I hastened to meet my pupil, and flying across the hall, rushed into the saloon, where I found his lordship in conversation with Mrs. Blagden.

"Dash me, my hearty, but here I am again," exclaimed his lordship. "Fine news!—I'm dished—done up. The sharps have queered me; and, quiz my nobility, but Topas is a deep one. Would you believe it, tutor?—they have taken possession of Hanover-square; and, dash my sconce, if all is not gone to the hammer."

"I can believe that any calamity will follow the confidence which you placed in such a fawning, cringing vagabond," said I. "But remember that I bid you beware; I cautioned you not to trust him."

"Dish my wig, but there are at least a dozen putting in their claims for a share of the booty," replied his lordship. "There's Pannel the coachmaker, though my kencarth has only
been

been finished three days ;—and I received a letter just as I was quitting Bath from the old Duke, demanding payment of his ten thousand guineas, with a neat postscript to the same tune from my worthy friend the obliging Pimpernel. So you see, my dainty, I have nothing to do but to marry a golden dolly, or give my creditors the go-by, with a brace of barking irons. Now as you are my tutor, my deep one, and I am your pupil, queer my caxon if you shall not decide the business : bullets or a wife ;—’tis all one to me ;—only I should like to follow a wiser head than my own, and do the thing in stile.”

“ I trust that there will be no necessity for either,” said I. “ The remedies are equally desperate ; and in either case, require some consideration. Shall I instantly set out for London, and endeavour to arrange matters so as to pacify your creditors ? ”

“ Quiz my nobility, but Topas nicked the family plate, and has lumped it by this time, with my pink diamond into the bargain : sold the whole kit for six hundred, queer my sconce, and left me not a dish large enough to hold a deviled drumstick. Then as for Pannel, he has nabbed my kencarth, my highflyer, my tandem, and old Alltrap’s landau into the bargain. There’s your deep one ! what say you now, tutor ? ”

I shook my head and was silent.

“ This is’nt the whole, my hearty,” continued his lordship :—“ They were all sported at Tatterfall’s along with my hunters, ragers, roadsters, and my bit of blood that used to walk me about the streets in the morning. Dish my wig, hut all this didn’t vex me. There’s worse yet to come, tutor, queer my nobility.”

Indeed ! said I.

“ My best polygraph is dead ! dead as a nail, dash my jockey ! died last Sunday. News arriv-

ed from Bath that I was down of a fever with little hopes of getting about again. Queer my chance, if my polygraph didn't get drunk five nights following, till his pulse was up to a physician. Quiz me, but old stiff-wig came a day after the fair; poor graphy was taken in, kept his bed three days, and hopped the twig on the fourth, queer my nobility. But this is not all, my deep one. Dash me, I was obliged to bury my ghost, lest he should continue to frighten the Dowagers, and set me down as a dead letter on the list of knowing ones."

"Had he no relations to perform that last act of kindness?" said I.

"Perhaps he had," replied Lord Kencarth; "but they wouldn't have known him if they had seen him. He had been the polygraph of three different deep ones. First he was the walking shadow of an unpopular character; and personified his prototype, dish my jasey, to a miracle. But in his perambulations, his ears were so often affronted by sarcastic remarks, knowing observations, sharp hits, and queer truisms, that, quiz my nobility, but he shifted his shape, and, like a true grub, approached one degree nearer to insignificance. He next became the phantom of a noble Viscount; but it would not do; three fêtes and a court equipage dished his fortune, to the last guinea; while all the world laughed at him, and nobody respected either his taste or his prodigality. Men scouted him, women quizzed him, tradesmen dunned him; and, strange to tell, even his original was ashamed of his folly."

"Well," said I, sighing, for my heart was heavily laden with sorrow, though my ear listened to my pupil's incessant volubility; "well, let us leave such insects to the inevitable storms of fate, and think

think on subjects of more consequence. I have just heard of a dear friend's death, and my regret is infinite."

"I'm sorry for it," interrupted his lordship hastily; "but you shall hear what happened to my poor polygraph."

"Mr. Randolph was the worthiest of men!" said I.

"Very likely," cried my pupil; "but, queer my nobility, will you listen? I have a treasure in store for you, my hearty; dash my jasey if I am not your best friend after all. You little think what a deep game I have played to make your fortune."

"My fortune! I do not comprehend you," said I; "pray explain yourself."

"When I have done my story," answered Lord Kencarth.

I nodded assent. "Well, go on," said I, knowing that it was impossible to put him out of his way.

He continued.

"The third person that poor Proteus undertook to personify, was a young Baronet. With a month's starvation, a crop, and four flannel waistcoats, he contrived to pass current among Jews, jockies, low women of all character, and high women of no character at all; till having outrun the constable, and not knowing a flat that would give him tick for a shiner, dish my sconce but he was nabbed six times in one week;—did the deep ones with Jew-bail, till they were up to the trick: so, not having either the fortune or the honesty of his prototype, he dabbled in trade, popped into the Gazette, and three months after started again with a new face, as my representative."

"The loss of such an appendage to fashionable notoriety must be terrible indeed," said I.

"Dish my jasey, but it is unlucky just at this moment," cried my pupil; "for as he shared the glory of the day, queer me, but he should have lived to partake of the disgrace. But this is not all, tutor; I have met with another misfortune almost as severe as the death of poor graphy!—Lady Alltrap is off!—off with old Heartwing, quiz my sponce!—she found that the sharps would dish me, and levanted without even bidding me farewell. So that now I have lost my reputation, been cheated out of my fortune, my polygraph dead, and my old girl deserted me, quiz my discretion, but I have nothing left to console me except my bull-dog and my tutor. So if you have a mind to marry, and travel, the Dowager has promised me five thousand to pay expences. I have found you a wife;—my estate is out at nurse;—and I'm your neat pupil all the world over, queer my caxon."

"I will with pleasure attend you on your travels," said I. "The change of scenes will perhaps solace my mind, and strengthen your experience. But as to the wife,—you must pardon me;—I am in no haste to marry."

"O! but by all that is quizzical you must, tutor; I have made the bargain," said his lordship;—"a nice girl, with thirty thousand pounds, and as thorough-bred a neat thing as ever ran over the course of notoriety:—dish my jasey but you must have her: I promised her that I would do the thing in stile, and you cannot be off."

"I trust that you are not serious!" said I, "for in my present state of mind it is impossible to think of marrying."

I had scarcely uttered these words, when Miss Hanbury entered the saloon, leading by the hand the lovely;

lovely, blushing, trembling Lady Arabella! I started as though I had seen a spectre, while Lord Ken-carth, giving me a sharp rap on the shoulders, exclaimed, "What think you now, my hearty?—Here she is, ready to leap into your arms: we have given Duchess the go-by, travelled post from Bath, and nothing is wanting now but a parson, dash my modesty."

Lady Arabella would have quitted the saloon, but my pupil detained her: I had not power to utter a syllable, and the scene was perfectly ludicrous. After some moments, I summoned recollection sufficient to pity the distress which I had evidently occasioned in Lady Arabella's mind by my cold reception of her; and placing my confusion to the account of sorrow, I made some awkward bows,—stammered out a few incoherent words,—expressed my gratitude, while I lamented her kindness, and took the first opportunity to quit the saloon; leaving the astonished trio to form their conjectures respecting my extraordinary conduct.

I hastened to my chamber, and, half bewildered with the perplexities of my situation, began to ruminate on a variety of plans, without resolution to fix my mind on any. I could not condemn the zeal of my pupil, though it had involved me in such a dilemma; I considered my conduct towards Lady Arabella as scarcely pardonable; for I now found by experience that I had played round a flame, which, though it could not warm my heart, had not only misled my judgment, but endangered my integrity. Another circumstance rose up in weighty proof against me. When I trifled away my hours of gallantry with Lady Arabella, I was piqued at Miss Hanbury's neglect,—and I was a beggar. Honour whispered to my mind, that though I could shake off the spells which her beauty, for a time,

wound about my heart, the display of that indifference which succeeded my caprice, would, by the world, be misconstrued; and censure would not fail to place the sudden change to my increase of fortune, rather than to the decrease of my passion for Lady Arabella. Thus, in danger of being accounted sordid, in affliction for the loss of my dear friend, my curiosity awakened respecting the mystery of Sir Sidney's birth; and with something like a tender interest still struggling in my bosom for Isabella, I was by the imprudence of professions, made in the language of common-place gallantry, and by the mistaken zeal of a thoughtless friend, obliged to marry a woman, whose person I did not care for, and whose mind I scarcely knew. But I had gone too far to effect an honourable retreat, and was therefore obliged to surrender every hope, every prospect of future happiness. Yet even under the cloud of despondency, reflection paused to pity the wretched imitators of Proteus, whom my pupil had described: those mistaken trifling mortals, who, to gratify the false ambition of a moment, ensure eternal disgrace, while they make it the labour of their lives to copy those follies, of which the dullest among them would blush to be the originals.

C H A P. XLI.

THE dilemma in which I had now involved myself seemed to promise either indelible disgrace or perpetual penance. I had been led away by the *ignis fatuus* of the passions; the dazzling flame which plays about the senses for a time, and then vanishes into nothing, while the dawn of reason opens, and shedding a genuine lustre on surrounding objects, harmonizes the mind, and takes from it every thing deceptive. The brilliant
graces

graces of Lady Arabella, though they embellished the circles of dissipation, were of a species too gaudy for the tranquil scenes of life. Like the splendid illuminations of a ball-room, they glittered to the vacant eye of folly, while they banished all the train of sober enjoyments from the mind; enjoyments that are best felt in the calm shades of repose, the noiseless solitudes of unsophisticated nature.

Could a being, weary of the vicissitudes of fortune, disgusted by the duplicity of mankind, sickening at the very name of pleasure, and struggling with the strong impressions which memory had imprinted on his brain, be happy with such a woman as Lady Arabella, even with all her powerful attractions, her interesting graces, and bewitching vivacity? Impossible! One smile from Isabella,—one kind look or word of returning sympathy, would have triumphed over the united powers of all her sex, even if every individual possessed more than the charms of Lady Arabella. Yet, honour commanded that I should keep my promise. I had, in the warmth of a momentary caprice, offered my hand in marriage. She accepted the proposal when I was a beggar, and I could not, when the smiles of fortune placed me above the misery of dependance, when she had deserted her family, and with voluntary generosity determined to bestow her person and fortune on me—I could not abandon her to the ridicule of the world; and to the humiliation which her self-love would consequently experience. The crisis of my fate was rapidly approaching; I had only this alternative—to bear the reputation of being a mean, capricious, sordid hypocrite, or to endure an eternal penance, for the impetuosity of my passions.

After an hour of agonizing conflicts, I determined on the latter. I resolved to expiate the long

catalogue of crimes, into which my follies had so often led me, and to become the contrite husband of Lady Arabella. I returned to the saloon, where I found the lovely fugitive, with my pupil and Miss Hanbury : I endeavoured to assume the placidity of resignation : the solemnity of my manner was placed to the account of regret for the loss of Mr. Randolph, and the day passed in a gloomy series of thought, which even the eccentricity of my pupil could not enliven.

Sir Sidney continued extremely ill :—Lady Aubrey's constant attention, united to her anxiety of mind, impeded her recovery ; yet she could not be prevailed on to leave my cousin's chamber, while by unremitting assiduity and sorrow she evinced a change of sentiment as unaccountable as it was honourable to her feelings.

Mrs. Blagden seldom quitted her own apartment : her seclusion originated neither in a sense of shame nor a pang of compunction : she courted solitude, to brood over mischief ; and while she enjoyed the scene of present perplexity, she anticipated the triumphs of approaching vengeance.

On the morning after Lady Arabella's arrival at Glenowen, I rose early, and strolled towards the parsonage, to see my old friend Andrew, who inflexibly refused to become an inmate of the manor-house while Mrs. Blagden presided as governess of the family. Passing the wood on the upper ground of the park, I met Lady Arabella : it was impossible to avoid her notice ; she inquired whither I was going ; and on my informing her that my visit was to the parsonage, she proposed accompanying me thither. We continued to walk hastily, till we came to the church-yard. I pointed out the grave of my mother ; when I repeated the epitaph which was engraved on her tombstone, Lady Arabella dropped a tear,—it was the pure celestial gem of feeling,

feeling, and her cheek never looked so lovely as at that moment. On entering the parsonage, Andrew presented me a second letter which had just arrived from Bristol. I opened it with a sigh which I could not suppress, and read the contents. They informed me, that Mr. Hanbury only waited to attend the funeral of Mr. Randolph, after which he purposed setting out for Glenowen. He concluded his letter with these words:—"Fortune has at length placed you above dependance, and happiness will now be within your reach, if the follies of the world have not contaminated the sensibilities of nature. There lives a being, Walsingham, whose affection has never ceased to sympathize in your fate, and whose virtues will, I trust, reward you."

I read the passage over and over. A variety of conjectures crowded on my mind, each succeeding the other, with a rapidity that bewildered me. Lady Arabella observed the agitation which the letter occasioned, and, with a degree of tender solicitude that increased my agony, conjured me to allow her that participation in my sorrows which friendship claimed, and which reason would hereafter sanction. "Can you refuse so natural a request to one who is destined to share with you all the future vicissitudes of fortune?" said she: "So united as we are by bonds of faith and affection, have I not a right to hope for that unbounded confidence, which will strengthen esteem, and lighten the load of sorrow under which you labour?"

I shuddered!—The gentle tone of her voice, and the generous language which it conveyed, seemed to proclaim me a wretch beyond the reach of consolation. I conjured her not to distract me with her kindness,—hastily tore the letter, and, after a short conversation with Andrew, proposed returning to the manor-house.

As we walked towards the park, she again renewed the subject of her intreaties: "Indeed, Walsingham, your unkind reserve has humbled me so much in my own esteem, that I can scarcely believe myself worthy of your affection: why, with an opinion of my truth, so sceptical, why did you take such pains to fascinate my regard, and to produce a decision in your favour, which has exposed me to the censure of the world? I cannot return to my home: I dare not meet the resentment of my mother. I never would have consented to place myself under the protection of Lord Kencarth, had I not believed you sincere, as I knew him to be honourable. He assured me that your attachment to me had induced you to visit Bath."

"He told the truth," said I, awkwardly.

"Then how have I since forfeited that attachment?" continued Lady Arabella. "Is it the temper of your mind to diminish in affection, in proportion as sacrifices are made to gratify your vanity? Oh, Walsingham! how unworthy of such a mind as yours is this levity,—this weakness! Leave the empty vanities of love to libertines and fools, and learn to value the female heart, in proportion as it encounters every misfortune with zeal and fidelity."

"I cannot defend myself.—I am the most criminal of mortals!" said I. "When I professed to adore you, my senses were fascinated by the beauty of your person. I now know the inestimable graces of your mind;—I respect, I admire them."

"Must I venture to build all my hopes of happiness on the icy basis of respect and admiration?" said Lady Arabella. "Must I rely on the fragile charm of what remembrance only presents, and hope to be beloved, because your senses were once fascinated by the little boast of beauty which nature lent me?"

She

She blushed and trembled.—I knew not what to say.—Her chagrin, her evident distress, penetrated my soul;—I recollected the fate of Amelia Woodford;—I pitied the susceptibility of the female mind, and more than ever condemned the barbarous levity of my own sex, which suffers the head to dictate what the heart is incapable of feeling. This was the second instance of my folly, in supposing that I acted under the influence of passion, when jealousy and wounded self-love formed the real source of every thought that actuated my conduct. Amelia was the victim of my affection for Isabella. That dreadful sacrifice rose up in judgment against me; and I shivered with horror, while I shrank with compunction.

After a pause of several minutes, Lady Arabella again addressed me. “It is but too evident that my vanity deceived me,” said she, sighing deeply; “my neglect of one who really adored me has proved that love is ever sure to punish his apostates. When I first saw you at Bath, I was engaged to marry him, who, piqued at my capricious conduct, is now the husband of Lady Aubrey.”

“Edward Blagden!”

“Even so,” replied Lady Arabella; “and to you I owe the loss of his affections: for you I have incurred the displeasure of my family, the censure of the world; and, as a punishment for my blind credulity, you consign me to the resentment of the one—the insults of the other. But I am told, that the diminution of your regard originates in the augmentation of your fortune.”

“Who has dared to accuse me of such baseness?” said I hastily, and interrupting her.

“Mrs. Blagden, Lady Aubrey’s friend—the mother of the ill-treated, the rejected Edward,” replied Lady Arabella, with a tone of proud disdain that stung my heart.

“Mrs.

"Mrs. Blagden is a wretch beneath your confidence," said I. "It has ever been her pleasure to traduce my name, and it shall in future be my pride to baffle her malignity. The idea that you can suspect me of an interested motive has decided my resolution :—accept my hand, lovely Arabella ;—would to God I were more worthy of your kindness ! I am a frail, an insignificant mortal ; but there is not in this weak, thus inconstant heart of mine, one particle of avarice :—there is not, by Heavens, Arabella."

She smiled, and faintly answered—"I believe you. Think no more of my childish suspicions : I know you are incapable of deceiving me, and I will rely henceforth implicitly on your honour."

This promise rendered my fate decisive. Her cheek wore the blushing smile of confidence, while my heart trembled at the sentence which honour had sternly pronounced against its future happiness.

In the course of the day, I revealed what had passed to Lord Kencarth. He commended my decision ; and, as secrecy was not one of his good qualities, he speedily communicated the subject of our conversation to the whole family. Not an individual seemed satisfied with my choice : Lady Aubrey was more than usually melancholy, and Miss Hanbury frequently quitted the room to conceal her tears. I endeavoured to reconcile my mind to my approaching union with Lady Arabella : I made every effort to indulge the flatterer Hope ; but the demon of Despair seemed to menace me through the tinsel veil of pleasure, and to predict the certitude of sorrow, amidst the proudest glow of anticipated splendour.

I passed a night without sleep ; every moment was devoted to reflection ; and all the events of my life again crowded in melancholy succession on these senses

senses which were nearly annihilated by sorrow. Alas, Rosanna! how little did I know my heart when I supposed, that, because it was wounded by neglect, tortured by jealousy, chilled by contempt, and lacerated by compunction, it was shielded by disdain against the attacks of sensibility. I felt, at this trying moment, that the long-cherished and darling passion of my soul was not easily vanquished. I looked back on the sombre detail which memory presented, but I only looked to weep, and to lament that susceptibility which, in the moment of remorse, menaced a new train of evils:

In a few days, I purposed giving my hand to Lady Arabella. I felt that I was unworthy of the confidence she placed in me, and trembled while I questioned the sincerity of my heart; yet there was no possibility of receding—my honour and my pride were at stake. I had trifled with the energies of reason—I had sacrificed them to the senses: I was an offender of the most culpable species—a plausible deceiver; who, with all the enthusiasm of Nature, had violated her laws, and boldly professed myself the disciple of folly and dissipation. The fatal moment, which gave Amelia Woodford to my ungovernable passions, was darkened by deception on her part, which, with rational minds, might plead in extenuation of my conduct; but there was no such subterfuge for conscious guilt in my seduction of Lady Arabella's heart—I rushed onward to the enterprise of vanity with my eyes open, my reasoning faculties awake: day after day, I pursued the phantom which flattered my vanity; and, divested of the enthusiasm of a heated mind, coldly, deliberately assailed her bosom, till its giddy inmate yielded to the strong magic of perseverance. From Miss Hanbury I had never received any proof of affection beyond that which she might have felt for a brother; Lady Arabella had set the world's opi-

nion

nion at defiance——quitted her home——offered me her splendid fortune—and, what was still more attaching than all these, had relied upon my honour. This reflection reconciled me to my engagement, and gave the amiable Arabella a decisive victory.

C H A P. XLII.

I FOUND on the following morning, that Sir Sidney had passed a night of extreme danger : his fever augmented, and he refused every medicine which had been ordered by his physician. Miss Hanbury, on entering the saloon at breakfast, presented a countenance of sorrow ; her eyes were dim with tears, and her cheek was pale for want of rest. Lady Aubrey made her excuses, and remained in my cousin's chamber. I several times entreated permission to visit the invalid, and was as repeatedly informed, that the physician left positive orders for no person except my aunt to enter his apartment. The day passed in anxiety ;—Sir Sidney had not slept during the last forty-eight hours. He talked and raved incessantly, resisted all the consolations of maternal solicitude, and at length became delirious. In this dreadful and increasing alarm, Lady Aubrey wished to procure a small quantity of laudanum, in hopes, by administering it, to tranquillize his senses. She suggested the idea to Miss Hanbury ; it was by her communicated to me, and I hastened to find the phial of that subtle drug, which, in my despair, I had purchased at Bristol. It was still in my portmanteau, and I delivered it to Lady Aubrey, who instantly hastened with it to Sir Sidney's chamber.

In the evening, the physician again visited my cousin ; his fears were visible in every feature, and the agony which filled the bosom of Isabella confirmed

firmed the danger of the noble and generous Sidney. Oh, Rosanna! my heart throbs, and my eyes are drowned in tears, while I proceed in my disastrous story. Another night passed in horror. The dawn again returned, and every breast still beat with apprehension:—the house was a scene of mourning. The few drops of laudanum, which Lady Aubrey had ventured to administer, had failed in the desired effect, and the irritation which they produced on the nerves of the sufferer augmented his malady:—every hope seemed to forsake us. The physician beheld no prospect of saving the ill-fated Sidney, and, with the prophetic command that the sufferer should be kept quiet, quitted his apartment with a countenance of mournful resignation.

The whole day passed in gloomy suspense: Sir Sidney had not uttered a syllable during the last twelve hours. I retired to my chamber at midnight, expecting that before day-break our despair would be complete:—all my former resentment was forgotten. The virtues, the sensibility of the liberal, the generous Sidney, filled every heart with affection and sorrow. I could in this momentous crisis find an excuse even for his conduct respecting Isabella.

I passed the melancholy hours till dawn-light in traversing my chamber; frequently opening my door, and listening when the least noise excited my attention. Just as day began to break, I heard Lady Aubrey's voice, and that of Isabella, as they stole across the gallery from one apartment to another. I could not account for their being absent from Sir Sidney, and, gently approaching the door of my aunt's room, I inquired how my cousin had passed the night. Lady Aubrey assured me that he was more tranquil, and had less fever; she attributed the change to the laudanum which I had given her,

her and I returned to my chamber with a heart considerably lighter than it was when I left it.

While I was entering my own room, I heard a door creak as it was gently opened, and, turning round to observe who was stirring, I perceived my aunt come forth, followed by Lady Arabella, wrapped in a loose *robe de chambre*, and scarcely awakened. They were at that end of the gallery which was farthest from my chamber, and I silently watched them, scarcely breathing with curiosity and astonishment. They entered the *boudoir* which led to Sir Sidney's apartment: Lady Aubrey seemed in earnest conversation with Lady Arabella; they closed the door with cautious timidity, and left me almost petrified with consternation.

I endeavoured to believe that this visit to the chamber of a man, who was the day before supposed to be dying, was merely the effect of compassion, in order to relieve Lady Aubrey from the fatigue of watching. I knew that no person was permitted to advance beyond the *boudoir*, and that Miss Hanbury had been my aunt's companion during the early part of the night. I fastened my room door, and throwing myself on the bed, endeavoured to close my eyes. But the rumination of my brain was not to be tranquillized; the variety of perplexing thoughts that rushed across it, in melancholy succession, kept me waking, though feverish for want of rest, and exhausted by perpetual inquietude.

On the following evening, Mr. Hanbury returned from Bristol. I hastened to the parsonage the instant I was informed of his arrival, and he received me with that kindness which had marked his conduct during my infancy. With a mixture of pain and satisfaction, he unfolded the particulars of Mr. Randolph's legacy. We entered upon the melancholy subject of his death with sorrow that

was sincere, and regret that was poignant. But you will judge of my consternation, Rosanna, when he read the following passage in the will of my deceased patron :—" I bequeath the sum of twenty thousand pounds to Walsingham Ainsforth, to be paid within three months after my decease, upon condition that he marries my niece Isabella Hanbury. In refusal of this my last solemn injunction, the said Walsingham Ainsforth shall receive only the sum of ten thousand pounds; the remaining half to be paid to my nephew Walter Hanbury."

I was overwhelmed with confusion: my engagement with Lady Arabella was yet a secret to Mr. Hanbury, and my chagrin was infinite. The loss of ten thousand pounds could not affect me; Lady Arabella's fortune was treble that sum. But with the choice of my bosom—the darling of my youth—the first and dearest object of my affections—poverty would have been preferable to splendour, and a mountain hovel, the abode of that felicity, which the proudest palace of prodigality could not have bestowed, with any other woman.

With some difficulty I concealed my emotion till Mr. Hanbury concluded the last line of Mr. Randolph's will; when, folding the parchment, while he dropped a tear to the memory of departed virtue, he thus addressed me :—" Walsingham," said he, " this liberal and earnest injunction of my generous uncle will, I trust, put a period to all your anxieties. There was once reason to believe that an union with Isabella could not possibly take place; another object, whose happiness was then at stake, so far influenced her mind, as to arm it against your merit, and her own inclinations. Time has, I trust, obliterated the impression of a young and volatile fancy, and the sober dictates of reason will remove that bar which has hitherto impeded the completion of your wishes. Sir Sidney Aubrey——"

" Spare

"Spare me the painful recapitulation of sad events," said I; "the present moment is sufficiently replete with tortures."

"I could scarcely speak. After a conflict that wrung my heart, I continued—"Oh, my friend!—my earliest and best protector!—how shall I learn to bear this new and agonizing trial of that fortitude which is almost wearied into feebleness by perpetual exertions?—The graces, the virtues of Isabella, deserve a better fate than that of her being wise to such a wretch as I am!—for you see before you the most ill-fated of mortals—the Pupil of Nature—the victim of prejudice—the heir to misfortune!—From my infancy I have been the dupe of false hopes and imaginary evils: I have alternately trusted the world, and been deceived by my credulity; I have been guilty of crimes which my soul never meditated, and involved in ruin every individual that has made an effort to save me. I loved Isabella;—I adored her. Years cherished my increasing passion, which months of disdain and persecution have not yet annihilated. Hope has wearied my senses into subjection, and I am now preparing to expiate my follies by a life of perpetual penance."

"I do not comprehend you," interrupted Mr. Hanbury.

"Would to Heaven Sir Sidney had never returned to Glenowen!" continued I: "or that Isabella had not loved him."

"The unhappy Sidney will not long survive a mother's false ambition," said Mr Hanbury, sighing; "the ravages of silent sorrow are evident in his wasting form and dejected features. I am painfully, delicately situated.—The forfeiture of half Mr. Randolph's legacy, by your refusing Isabella's hand, would enrich me, yet the union would render you completely happy. Were not this the case I should counsel you."

"How

“How?—I solicit that counsel; I will endeavour to follow it,” said I eagerly. “I am on the very precipice of fate;—one step will for ever destroy me.”

Mr. Hanbury started from his seat, and walked hastily about the room. His countenance was expressive of the agitation which wrung his heart. “Walsingham,” said he; “you are, indeed, the most persecuted of mortals—my heart bleeds when I retrace the progress of your sufferings; and it shudders while I anticipate those scenes which are yet to come. Isabella is the slave of friendship; her attachment to your cousin has been heroic and exemplary: it will only terminate with her existence; and that virtue, from which, I trust, no power could ever tempt her to deviate, will be fully proved when the grave shall close on the sorrows of Sir Sidney.”

“Be explicit, I conjure you,” said I. “If there is any mystery attached to the birth of my unhappy cousin, confide it in my bosom—trust to my honour, my secrecy, my gratitude.”

Mr. Hanbury approached me; he looked as if he was going to unfold some secret of importance:—his countenance became convulsively agitated, his whole frame shook with stifled emotions, and he was affected even to tears. “Why are you so importunate?” said he; “a few weeks will decide this dreadful business. Lady Aubrey will be prevailed upon to suffer an elucidation of events which now seem big with destruction. That fury, Mrs. Blagden, is the origin of every misery, of every impending calamity that threatens the unfortunate family.”

At this moment we were interrupted by Lady Arabella and Lord Kencarth, who came, by Lady Aubrey’s desire, to request that Mr. Hanbury would immediately hasten to the manor-house. “Dith
my

my jasey, parson," cried my pupil, "I thought you were come to Ainsforth's wedding; but, quiz my conceit, if I am not afraid it will be poor Aubrey's burying. The good fellow is upon the go; his life's not worth six weeks purchase—not a Jew in Duke's Place would do him for half the time. The dowager is almost frantic; so, queer my nobility, but you must come and preach her into resignation, while Walsingham settles the preliminaries with Lady Arabella. Quiz my wig, doctor, what do you think of tutor's choice?—A nice girl!—the neat thing—thirty thousand—and thorough bred, dash my jasey."

Mr. Hanbury was lost in astonishment. Lord Kencarth was entirely a stranger, and his language wholly new to the ears of classical refinement. But even the singularity of manner and conversation, which distinguished his lordship, did not so complete the consternation of the moment, as the discovery that Lady Arabella was the object of my choice. The want of confidence on my part seemed to strike Mr. Hanbury's mind with considerable force, and he had but too much reason to place that silence on the account of selfish reserve, which, in reality, originated in my fear to give him pain. His looks strongly indicated resentment—my grateful esteem took the alarm which was given to friendship; while, taking his hat, Mr. Hanbury abruptly quitted the room, and set out for the manor-house, to obey the summons of Lady Aubrey.

"Dash my purity, but there goes a rum one!" exclaimed Lord Kencarth, as Mr. Hanbury walked with his eyes bent on the ground, down the little path which led towards the churchyard. "Why tutor, quiz my learning, did this fellow furnish your garret?" cried Lord Kencarth; "why, all the merchandize of his brain does not seem worth the catalogue that nature has given in his features!

Queer

Queer my mazzard, if he is not a walking *memento mori* ! cross bones and a skull !—an animated tomb-stone, without a single line on his phiz to give him a good character. Why, he looks like a musty folio in a black binding ;—full of learning, and only fit for the cold regions of pedantic obscurity. Dish my jasey, but you were in the right to levant, my hearty."

I was too painfully perplexed to pay much attention while my pupil was speaking. Lady Arabella expressed her concern at my inquisitade, and though she had little reason to approve Mr. Hanbury's abrupt departure, her respect for my feelings prevented her giving an opinion which he suspected would augment their irritation.

We returned to the manor house : on our arrival we found that Sir Sidney was sleeping. The physician had just left his room, and some hopes were entertained, that a few hours rest would lower the fever which oppressed him. Isabella continued to attend Lady Aubrey in the *l'audoir* adjoining my cousin's chamber ; and Mr. Hanbury's acute distrets was visible to every observer.

C H A P. XLIII.

ANOTHER day passed, and at the close of evening I strolled towards the village. The sky was clear, and a cutting frost augmented the sharpness of the wind that descended from the mountains. An opening which led towards Abergavenny broke the towering amphitheatre of nature which nearly encircled Glenowen, and the setting sun threw a deep crimson hue on the horizon, the warmth of whose colouring but little accorded with the freezing atmosphere of a winter twilight.

I continued to wander along the skirts of the valley, till the west shut in, and I could scarcely discern

cern the prominent features of the landscape. As I hastened homeward across the park, I observed a man at a small distance keeping an even pace with me, till we came to a nook peculiarly lonesome and rugged, owing to the torrents which had passed over it in their descent from the mountains. Here he stopped. The obscurity of the place rendered every thing indistinct; but the sound of his footsteps suddenly ceasing, I hurried towards the spot where I concluded he waited to receive me. I had no weapon of defence but a strong oak stick: the sky every moment became more dark, and the solitary corner being overshadowed with firs, the gloom was deepened while it gave additional security to the suspected wanderer.

I advanced, and the lurking assassin entrenched himself behind a jutting grotto which was erected as an object of perspective from the south wing of the manor-house. I stole slowly and with caution towards his hiding place. He would have retreated.

"Discover yourself," said I, "or expect no mercy."

"Keep off," replied the incognito, "for I am armed: if you approach, you perish."

"Do you wish to rob me?" said I.

"No," answered the stranger firmly.

"Am I known to you?"

"You are," said he. "But if ever I am tempted to assault you, it will be in my own defence."

"Have I ever injured you?"

"That is a question which I am not obliged to answer," said he. "Depart; do not urge me to destroy you. Again I repeat the word,—depart."

The tone in which he spoke was rather that of entreaty than of menace. I knew not how to account for so strange an adventure. The voice seemed familiar to me.—I kept my eyes fixed on the shadowy

dowry nook, and expected every moment that he would rush forth to put his threats in execution. Several minutes had elapsed in total silence, when he again addressed me :—

“ Remember the unfortunate Linbourne, and—begone.”

“ Linbourne !” repeated I, with new anxiety which was blended with horror, “ what of him ?”

No answer was returned, but I distinctly heard, “ Oh God !” murmured with an agonized sigh. The tone was similar to that which had met my ear a few nights before in Mrs. Blagden’s chamber. I listened attentively ;—the moon began to rise ;—the firs waved to and fro with a low whispering sound, and the coldness of the air was scarcely supportable. Still I determined not to quit the spot, under the anxiety which the stranger’s words had occasioned. I continued to walk hastily, measuring a short space, near the nook of concealment. Again, a stifled murmuring tone of ejaculation aroused me, and again I stopped to listen. I now saw the form of my companion standing near the entrance of the rude grotto. His figure appeared to be tall ; but it was impossible to discover his age or features. “ Mr. Ainsforth,” said he, “ do not attempt to approach me. I am desperately situated. I know you ;—we have met on less mysterious occasions ;—you believe that I am dead ; and you think yourself the cause of my destruction. There are reasons why nature would paralyse your hand, were it raised to annihilate me ; therefore do not attempt that, which would inevitably be the cause of your own perdition.”

“ Are you Lord Linbourne ?” said I, with a mixture of hope and agitation. The stranger returned no answer. I advanced a few paces towards the niche. “ Your temerity will be fatal to you,” said the unknown person : “ the moonlight will render you

you a distinct mark, while I am shrouded in the shadow of the mountain. I have pistols ;—they are loaded. Within this grotto I have two armed associates.”

I continued to ascend the short acclivity, when a female shrieked horribly. I started back, and a voice which I instantly knew to be old Andrew’s, called to me from the low-ground of the park. I hastened to meet him, still keeping my eyes on the spot where the stranger had entrenched himself. It was impossible for any persons to escape without our seeing them ; and after dispatching Andrew to alarm the domestics, I concealed myself amidst a clump of firs, to watch the movements of the enemy.

Every moment seemed an age till Andrew’s return. There remained not a doubt in my mind, but the stranger was Lord Linbourne :—and still I was unable to guess the reason of his visit to Glenowen. The distance between us while we conversed was not more than twenty paces ;—that of my removed post, somewhat more than an hundred. I waited with a degree of impatience that was torturing :—I heard the stranger whistle three times, and a buzzing of voices followed the signal. The moonlight fell on the grove of firs beneath which I had taken refuge, but the side of the mountain was still in shadow. I had waited near a quarter of an hour, the concealed person not yet choosing to venture from the nook, when I observed old Andrew, with four companions, hastening across the park at some distance. The incognito, seeing them also, rushed forth from his hiding-place, taking the narrow path along the side of the mountain with incredible velocity : I followed till I lost sight of him. It was in vain to pursue the fugitive farther : the route which he had chosen led to the high

high road, where, I concluded, he had horses in waiting for him and his companions.

We now returned to the dark nook in search of the female, whose shriek I had heard on ascending the acclivity. We entered the grotto, and searched every niche of concealment, but nothing living was to be found. The domestics, who had armed themselves for a terrible rencontre, laughed heartily at what they considered a false alarm; and I returned with considerable chagrin towards the manor-house, while Andrew measured back his weary steps to the parsonage.

C H A P. XLIV.

SO deeply was I wrapped in thought, that I scarcely felt conscious which way I was going, till I arrived at the portico. I was undecided in opinion, whether or not I ought to reveal what had passed at the foot of the mountain, till I had taken farther steps for the discovery of my secret visitor, whose motive was as undefinable, as his words and energetic entreaties were strongly impressive. With curiosity so awakened, it was impossible for my active spirit to remain tranquil: reason and nature whispered, that to investigate the business was incumbent on me, for a variety of motives; and, thoroughly persuaded that the concealed wanderer was no other than Lord Linbourne, I could not rest under the suspense and astonishment which his appearance had excited.

However deeply my thoughts were absorbed by what had recently happened, on my arrival at the manor-house, the first idea which roused me from my reverie, was that of Sir Sidney's precarious situation. I found Lord Kencarth awaiting my return in the saloon; he was alone; and the information which he gave, tending but little to

satisfy my mind, I repaired to the *boudoir*, adjoining my cousin's chamber, to repeat my inquiries. Fearful of disturbing the invalid, I opened the door with caution, and softly entered. I found no person whatever in the usual place of unremitting attendance ;—no light but that which the fire supplied ; while by the universal desertion which marked the scene of former solicitude, I concluded that Sir Sidney was asleep and better.

I now hastened to Lady Aubrey's apartment, and found that also empty. Surprise began to give the alarm which my senses were ever open to receive, and I again repaired to the *boudoir*. As I gently opened the door, I heard a low humming sound in Sir Sidney's chamber. I approached the threshold to enquire after his health, when my ear distinctly caught the tone of Lady Arabella's voice. I started. "Dearest Sidney," said she, with an accent of the most impressive tenderness, "set your mind at ease, and endeavour to support your spirits for the sake of those that love you. Had you declared your sentiments at an earlier period, believe me, I never should have thought of Mr. Ainsforth." I was almost petrified with astonishment.

I heard my cousin reply in language so inarticulate, and with a voice so feeble, that the words only conveyed a mingled murmur, which left me as much in doubt as ever.

After a pause of two or three minutes, Lady Arabella continued : "Why conceal your sentiments from your cousin ?" said she : "I entertain so high an opinion of his generosity, that I make no doubt but he would instantly relinquish his claims to my hand, if he knew that your repose would be the forerunner of our union. His cold reception of me gave evident proof how little I am necessary to his happiness : and since you have
done

done me the honour to declare your wishes, I shall not hesitate to break my engagement finally."

The sensation that rushed through my heart when I heard her utter these words was indescribable: it was a conflict betwixt joy and wounded pride.—The loss of Lady Arabella was an event desirable, in my perplexing state of mind; and yet I felt piqued at the reflection that Sir Sidney Aubrey was again my rival.

I now heard Lady Arabella rise from her seat, and draw the curtains of my cousin's bed. "Heaven preserve you," said she, "and inspire your heart with that confidence in my sincerity, which I will never fail to merit. With this assurance, endeavour to compose your mind."

Here she paused, as if to embrace him. My cheek was flushed with a momentary glow of resentment; but it passed away, and I felicitated myself on my escape, more than I lamented her inconstancy.

I descended to the saloon, in hopes to find Miss Hanbury, to whom I longed to communicate the purport of my discovery. I recollected the conversation which I had heard in the wood, on the fatal night of my rencontre with Sir Sidney: his professions of eternal faith, and Isabella's foolish fond credulity. I found the saloon empty; and full of the important triumph which possessed my mind, I waited impatiently near a quarter of an hour, in hopes that supper would be served, and the family assembled. A thousand anticipated sources of fair retaliation seemed to burst forth on my exhilarated fancy; and while I cursed the inconstancy of the sex, I felt delighted by the hope of detecting and humbling the vanity of Miss Hanbury, while I ex-

posed the duplicity, and rejected with scorn an alliance with the trifling, capricious Lady Arabella.

I discovered nothing new in the character and conduct of Sir Sidney Aubrey. I considered him as one of those beings who love without feeling, and change without remorse: whose vanity forms the basis of every triumph; and whose conquests pass like pleasing dreams over the senses, neither disturbing the tranquil scenes of existence, nor influencing the passions by one transient pleasurable moment. All the inquietudes of love which seemed to invade his breast, I considered as proofs of his refinement in deception: and the more he proved himself the master of his art, the less I considered him as intitled to my pity.

Another quarter of an hour elapsed, and I began to grow more impatient. I rung for a servant, and inquired after Lord Kencarth:—he was no where to be found. I then dispatched him with a message to Miss Hanbury:—she was also absent.

Lady Arabella now entered the room;—with an air of easy effrontery she inquired how I felt myself after my evening walk. “The weather is intensely cold,” cried she.

“Almost as cold as women’s hearts,” said I.

“But I fear not quite so changeable,” retorted her ladyship.

“There is little merit in boasting the imperfections of Nature,” said I; “yet women will sometimes vaunt those traits which men would be ashamed of.”

“It is no uncommon thing,” replied Lady Arabella, “for your sex to condemn the very precepts you inculcate. The heart of a modern lover is sufficiently torpid to petrify even the soul of sympathy.

I wonder

I wonder how the torch of love continues to burn at all in such regions of inanity."

"You are sarcastic, Lady Arabella," said I, with assumed *nonchalance*. She smiled, but made no answer. "Well!" continued I, with a sigh of resignation, "you are right I believe:—this world has little pleasure for a heart of sensibility; and those who are most gifted with apathy are the likeliest to be tranquil. For my own part, I never mean to feel again. I will abjure the very name of love, and for the remainder of my days become an anchorite."

Lady Arabella did not seem pleased with this declaration, because it deprived her of the triumph which she anticipated in refusing me her hand. I was apprehensive that I had piqued her vanity too far; and that she would break her promise to Sir Sidney, merely for the gratification of punishing my apostacy. She reddened with offended pride, and was on the point of shedding tears. I varied the topic of conversation,—talked of the weather, an everlasting subject for animadversion when the moments are prolonged by *ennui*: I then lamented the indisposition of Sir Sidney: this opportunity was too precious to escape Lady Arabella's notice, and she began with most feminine resentment to expatiate on the personal graces and mental virtues of my cousin. I knew her motive, and that knowledge defeated her purpose. Every word she uttered was confessed with reiterated praise, and new encomiums, more lavishly bestowed, than readily acknowledged.

"He is the handsomest creature breathing!" cried Lady Arabella.

"Agreed," said I.

"The most amiable!" continued her ladyship.

"Unquestionably!" added I.

"Accomplished beyond description!" cried Lady Arabella.

“ And good-natured—almost to a fault !” interrupted I.

My fair friend began to grow angry:—her cheek half smiling between resentment and contempt, changed colour, as the circulation was influenced by the sensations of her mind.—“ I am astonished,” said she, with a glance of marked disdain ; “ I am really astonished, that such a model of perfection should not have rendered all his associates perfectly amiable.”

This reproof did not mortify my self-love : Lady Arabella’s evident partiality towards Sir Sidney Aubrey, and the conversation which I had overheard in his chamber, completely chilled the ardor of a passion, which originating in caprice, was ever susceptible of a remedy.

The fair inconstant waited some time to see if her declarations excited the desired emotion in my bosom ; for though she had predetermined to break her engagement, she could not bear the idea of my meeting her wishes more than half way. She tried every art of coquetry to rouse my feelings, and to pique my pride ; but finding the strong bulwark of conviction too powerfully armed by resolution, she had recourse to all the light artillery of disdain. She smiled, while she bit her lip with vexation ; and hummed a tune, while her eyes were glazed with tears of resentment. Had I not witnessed proofs of her falsehood, and heard the language of infidelity falling from her own tongue, I should have pitied her distress, and execrated my own versatility. But the dying embers of affection, if they once resist the breath of jealousy, will rekindle no more ; though its latent sparks may undermine the heart, and, by slow degrees, consume the last atom of expiring friendship.

After a considerable interval of sullen taciturnity, Lady Arabella renewed the subject of panegyric.

“ I must

" I trust and hope that the beloved and amiable Sidney will yet live to ornament this world of insignificance," said she. " Heaven knows how sincerely I should lament, how tenderly Miss Hanbury would deplore the loss of such a mortal."

The conclusion of this remark pierced my bosom acutely. Lady Arabella observed the rapid revolution of my feelings, and did not fail to follow the impulse which prompted her to awaken them. " Even her regard for Lord Kencarth does not exclude from her bosom the justice of admiration," continued she; " and though her affections may be his lordship's, her friendship is still due to the virtues of Sir Sidney."

" Unquestionably," interrupted I; " and every sensation, which so pure a heart as Isabella's may feel, will be prompted by good sense, and sanctioned by discretion; for *she* is above the folly of caprice; *she* is too proud to court that esteem which she does not hope to render reciprocal."

" Were you always of this opinion?" cried Lady Arabella, drawing on her glove with the acerbity of vexation.

" There have been moments when I condemned Isabella's conduct, when I thought her an empty, vain coquet," said I; " but even follies become trivial by comparison with faults of greater magnitude; and we are induced to tolerate the errors of friendship, though we shrink with repugnance from the treacheries of love."

" What do you call the treacheries of love? - it is a fine romantic word," said Lady Arabella, endeavouring to laugh: " but those who are most prone to rail against treason, are frequently themselves the most atrocious traitors."

I comprehended the oblique censure; but it failed to provoke an explanation, which I reserved for a more important crisis. Lady Arabella's conduct in Sir

Sidney's chamber authorised my resolution, and I determined not to marry her, let the consequences be ever so fatal. So easily may we find a pretext when we wish to violate the bonds of affection.

Another half hour had passed in that sort of conversation which, however incomprehensible to the cynical, or trivial in the opinion of the wise, was perfectly consistent with the awakened resentment of two capricious lovers ; for, to confess the truth, I believed Lady Arabella's attachment to me was formed on the quicksand basis of vanity, and that of the very worst kind—the vanity of universal conquest. She had arrived at an age when a lover was an indispensable appendage to fashionable notoriety ; and as the duchess, her mother, did not yet think it time to relinquish the myrtle wreath in favour of her lovely epitome, the lively Arabella traversed the *parterre* of busy life, firmly resolved to decorate her own bosom with those trophies of conquest, which she had little hope of wresting from the brows of her maternal rival. It was a just remark of an enlightened author*, that one of the most perplexing situations for the female heart is that where the daughter bloomed before the mother began to fade. The many instances which we meet with in fashionable life corroborate the observation ; and to this circumstance may be attributed the spirit of rivalry, which often kindles a flame to destroy those fine sensibilities which should cement the dearest of all human connections—that of child and parent. Thence it is, that we see beautiful grandmothers disputing the palm of victory with their no less lovely daughters, who, in haste to prove the folly of their parents, by becoming early mothers, in their turn lay the foundation for future hours of domestic inquietude. Such was precisely the situation of Lady Arabella ; and such will be the con-

* Doctor Johnson.

sequences of early marriages, till Time shall take his last flight over every scene of human vicissitude.

C H A P. XLV.

I BEGAN now to feel some degree of uneasiness at the absence of Isabella and Lord Kencarth. The time of night, and the impropriety of the event, no less astonished the greater part of the family. The manor-house was searched from the roof to the foundation; several persons were dispatched to explore every avenue of the grounds: others hastened to the parsonage, while I, with a mind equally a stranger to hope as to fear, set out to make inquiries at the neighbouring village.

I observed, amidst the general confusion, that Lady Arabella was provokingly serene. Mrs. Blagden had also absented herself from the manor-house, and nobody knew her motive for so doing. These circumstances, combined with Isabella's departure, puzzled and alarmed me: still I hastened towards the village, and still my heart palpitated with impatience and solicitude.

It was now past midnight. The weather had become cloudy, and a drizzling rain fell fast upon the mountains; the wind was rising, and the haze rendered every object indistinct. I traversed the park without meeting with the slightest interruption. I again passed the grotto, and the nook which had concealed the mysterious stranger:—all was quiet, and I at length reached the village. The first place I flew to was the public-house—the surest scene of intelligence in an obscure hamlet; for it is there that the wants of the little, and the follies of the great, are investigated with that freedom of speech which is the birthright of mankind, and which was once the pride of a degenerated people.

When I reached the sign of the Goat, I observed lights in most of the windows ; which led to a conclusion, that the family was not yet in bed. The singularity of this circumstance, at so late an hour, inspired my breast with hopes that I should obtain some intelligence respecting the fugitives. The idea of Lord Linbourne strongly possessed my mind, and a thousand dreadful conjectures followed as rapidly as thought. I entered the lower room, where I found the servant girl whom I had seen on my last visit. She started, and became suddenly as pale as ashes. I made her a signal not to speak, by pressing my finger on my lip, and, at the same time, grasping her arm with impressible firmness. She trembled, fell upon her knees before me, and bursting into tears, with a low voice conjured me not to betray her. " Then there is something to divulge ?" said I. " Be quick, or you shall repent of your secrecy."

She now perceived my pistol—for I had thought it prudent to arm myself ; it was in my hand, which, till that moment, I had kept behind me.

" I have promised not to tell :—but ask your questions, and I will answer them by signals," said the girl.

This species of prevarication is not uncommon with vulgar minds ; and, in the present case, I was glad to avail myself of it. Time was precious :—I heard voices in the apartment up stairs, and the girl began to tremble more violently than ever.

" What persons are in the room above ?" said I.

She held up two fingers.

" Two persons ?"

She nodded assent.

" A man and a woman ?"

Again she inclined her head.

My impatience would not wait to ask another question, but, darting by her, I ascended the stairs with frantic impetuosity.

On

(30)

On my approaching the door the girl shrieked. I heard some person suddenly lock it, and again a low humming sound of voices convinced me that I was not mistaken. "I request to speak only five words with you," said I. "The whole country is alarmed, and in search of you. This absurd conduct will only expose you to insult, and excite the resentment of Lady Aubrey. Be advised;—I come as a friend, as one who now sees the folly of his past perseverance, and only wishes to bid you an eternal farewell."

I listened—but all was silent as the grave. I dared not violate the laws of propriety by forcing the door, and yet I had not resolution to depart. "Come, come," continued I; "this is folly. Open the door only for a moment; I am determined not to leave this spot till I have seen you—only for a moment:—one word—to bid you adieu for ever."

Rosanna, the ever predominating, the rash thought, which had so often contaminated my mind, at that instant grew terribly seductive. The pistol was loaded;—I raised my hand towards my head, when the servant girl, who had followed unseen by me, grasped my arm, and, suddenly turning the instrument of death, in the struggle, discharged it through the door of the chamber.

A loud shriek followed the explosion, and immediately after I heard the casement opened. I leaped the whole flight of stairs, and hastened to the front of the house just as a female was escaping from the window. On seeing me she drew back; the lights in the room were extinguished. I was mad with rage and disappointment, and again ascended the staircase; where I felt myself seized by the throat, while a stern voice exclaimed—"Rash Walsingham!—why continue to seek your own destruction? why wish a second time to stain my soul with blood?—Begone, your life is in my power. I am armed;—the blade
now

now trembles in my hand with which I can annihilate you."

"Then strike," said I; "for by the Eternal Powers, I never will quit this spot till I am satisfied."

He continued—

"I have not resolution to murder you. Nature clings about my heart, and bids me yet be merciful. Oh God! why, why do you seek to know me?—The fatal secret will wring your breast. Begone;—I once more conjure you to begone."

I endeavoured to grapple with him, while I called loudly for a light. The affrighted girl had flown to alarm the village, and I had no resource but the little strength which astonishment and despair had left me.

We wrestled for some moments. My antagonist was athletic, but guilt and terror enervated his limbs, and, after a severe struggle, I overpowered him.—He fell.—"Oh God!" exclaimed he, with an agonized voice, "my own accursed knife has penetrated my breast. Fly, Walsingham;—save yourself—for I am murdered."

I reeled down the stairs;—there was no light in the lower room, except that which was afforded by a small wood fire:—I rushed out of the house. As I passed the threshold I heard a deep groan, and faintly discerned a female stretched on the ground beneath the window. The dangers of my situation seemed to augment every moment: I would have stopped to raise the wretched sufferer, but the idea of having already committed murder bewildered me with horrors, and with tottering limbs I hurried towards the manor-house. Such an hour I had never before experienced. My whole frame was convulsed—my mind maddened; while the spacious vault of Heaven that hung over me seemed as dark as the internal hell which filled my bosom. I crossed the park with my eyes almost starting from their sockets; every step
seemed

seemed to tremble on eternity, and every breeze that moaned over the mountains, in fancy whispered approaching dissolution. I rushed into the portico, and, without stopping, entered the saloon where Lady Aubrey and Mr. Hanbury were waiting impatiently for my return. The lights presented an object which made humanity shudder! My face was pale,—my hair dishevelled,—my waistcoat torn open,—and my breast bathed with blood.

Lady Aubrey, concluding that I had destroyed Lord Kencarth, sunk powerless on a chair:—Mr. Hanbury, strongly impressed with horrors, had not resolution to inquire the cause of my disordered looks, and I fell into his arms, which had scarcely strength to support me.

C H A P. XLVI.

BEFORE I had time to explain the dreadful event which had taken place, a messenger, out of breath with speed and terror, arrived from the village, demanding instantly to speak with Lady Aubrey. She quitted the saloon, faint and trembling. Mr. Hanbury's fears anticipated the destruction of Isabella, and the anguish of his mind was undescrivable. I still leaned upon his shoulder; I attempted to speak—my lips quivered—my voice faltered—and the fruitless effort proved, more strongly than language could have done, the torture of my soul, the magnitude of my despair.

In a few moments Lady Aubrey rushed wildly into the saloon—"Save! Oh! save yourself, unhappy Walsingham!" said she, "and escape, while you have yet time. Your life will be the forfeit of your rashness,—for you have murdered Edward Blagden."

"Murdered!" repeated Mr. Hanbury, shrinking almost to the ground. Lady Aubrey continued addressing him: "The villagers are alarmed, but they know

know not who has perpetrated this horrible deed: Walsingham's situation will fix the guilt on him;—entreat, O! entreat him to fly!" Then clasping my hand, she threw herself upon her knees before me.—"Alas! unhappy and neglected child of my dear dead sister, I have been the cause of all thy crimes!" said she. "For my cursed avarice has driven thee on to this last dreadful act of desperation." She hung round me in an agony of tears. She kissed my trembling hand, and bathed it with the torrents which flowed from her wild and starting eyes. "Oh! my poor Sidney," cried she, "what,—what will be thy destiny?"

"I will go to Edward Blagden," said I. "A thousand lives, had I as many, and were they all at stake, should not prevent my seeing him."

"Almighty God!" exclaimed Mr. Hanbury, raising his eyes towards Heaven, "this is an hour of tremendous retribution."

I tore myself from Lady Aubrey's grasp;—she fell. I darted out of the room, and hastened to my chamber. After changing my clothes, I flew to the *boudoir*. The door was open to Sir Sidney's apartment, and I beheld Lady Arabella sitting by his pillow. Again I descended to the saloon: my aunt and Mr. Hanbury were gone to visit the dying Edward. I rushed forth like a maniac from his cell of horrors;—my limbs seemed to bear me with supernatural velocity:—I darted across the park. The first break of dawn presented to my view the surrounding ramparts of nature, whose tremendous altitude mingled with the clouds, hiding their heads, as if to shun the horrors of the world beneath. Still I pursued my course,—desperate in misfortune,—but unconscious of premeditated guilt.

When I came to the scene of blood, I rushed towards the parlour, where I beheld Lady Aubrey kneeling on the floor, like the image of despair. By
her

her side on a mattress lay the wretched Judith in the agonies of death. During the struggle betwixt Edward Blagden and myself, after the pistol was fired through the door, she endeavoured to escape upon a penthouse which projected beneath the window. In the attempt she fell. Almost every bone in her body was shattered by the concussion;—her arm and leg were broken,—her skull fractured, and her flesh bruised, while the agonies of a violent death wrung her heart in every fibre.

As I approached her, she smiled, with a ghastly and convulsive expression that made me shiver. “Ah!” exclaimed she, “are you come? Feast, feast your vengeance on the life-blood of your enemy. But there is yet a new pang in store for you—a deed that will curse you!” She writhed with torture, and again her countenance was terribly exulting.—“Perish, perish your hated name,” said she, again exerting all her strength to speak. “Go! look at the murdered Edward,—he who has been condemned to obscurity and shame,—while you——”—Again the anguish of her wounds arrested the curse which faltered on her tongue. I turned from the miserable wretch, and, shuddering, flew to the chamber of Edward Blagden. I opened his curtains—and—O God! Rosanna! every limb seemed petrified with horror; for, in his pale distorted features, I instantly recognized the young highwayman whom I had left, as I thought, expiring near Devizes.”

He raised his languid eyes, and feebly uttered a few incoherent words. I could only distinguish the broken sentence,—“My soul—thy hour is come,—yet nature—nature shudders!—Oh! a little—a little mercy!—one short minute, to tell the dreadful secret.” He grasped my hand, and bathed it with the cold damp of death. I knelt beside his bed:—“Generous Walsingham!” said he, “endeavour to forget this dreadful moment. I never was convinced till
now;

now ;—I suspected that you were the person, by Lady Emily Delvin's letters to Lady Aubrey. The hand of fate has led you hither. I am criminal beyond the hope of mercy." Again he shrunk upon his pillow, and groaned with contending agonies.

"Walsingham!" said he, fixing his hollow eyes on mine—"prepare!"

"For what?" said I, eagerly.

"Oh God!" continued he, "prepare his heart for this afflicting trial!"—Then turning his mournful gaze towards me, "Nothing less than self-preservation," said he, should have armed me against you:—my life was in your hands;—what else could have contaminated my soul, by the infernal thought of murdering—a brother?"

"A brother!"

"The same blood that now gushes from my guilty bosom, warms your aching heart. Oh, Walsingham!" continued he, "you behold in this tortured, wretched atom of human frailty,—the son—of Arthur Ainsforth."

My father! Almighty God! is it possible?" said I, falling on his pillow, and pressing his icy hand to my feverish shrinking brain: "I now can account for all the miseries of my past life! for nature strikes conviction to my soul,—and tells me—that Mrs. Blagden"—"Is my mother.—The early victim of our fickle parent's violated promises," interrupted the ill-fated being. "From the hour of his marriage with Penelope Waller, she vowed to seek revenge. It has been the study, the labour of her days; for when the object of her jealousy expired, her vengeance was transferred to you."

A convulsive pang arrested the power of articulation;—again he grasped my hand. "Yet another moment—oh, agonising Death!—another moment to confess the magnitude of crimes!—The poison, which was daily administered to Lady Aubrey, was procured
by

by me. My affections were devoted to the daughter of the Duchess of Riversford. Want of fortune prevented the alliance, and I married to obtain that pernicious ore which has been my destruction. Had the duchess consented to our union, my soul had now been guiltless; but to procure the means of purchasing the woman of my heart, I had first recourse to the gaming-table. Then—oh! Walsingham!—you cannot but remember my next expedient.”

Again he paused:—the agitation of his mind caused his wound to bleed incessantly. His cheek became more livid—his lip assumed a purple hue—his eyes were veiled with the film of death—and the fainting balls seemed to look with anguish through their glassy prison. With a feeble, and scarcely articulate voice, he continued—“I trust that my misguided mother will survive to expiate her crimes by penitence. In a few minutes, Walsingham, I shall close my lips in eternal silence. Dreadful moment to appear before the Omnipotent!—so charged with guilt—so trembling at his awful——”

As he spoke, a piercing shriek issued from the room beneath:—I guessed the signal to be that of death. Edward, who also heard it, endeavoured to raise himself in his bed. “Yet a moment,” said he; “one little moment, to implore forgiveness for that wretched being who is gone to render her account before the Throne of Mercy!—Pardon, pardon her, oh Heaven!”—Then, pressing my hand to his bleeding heart, he added,—“Bear my contrite sigh to Lady Aubrey—tell her that, in my last moments, I entreated her to remember me with pity.”

A torturing spasm shook his frame to annihilation. He had not power to speak; but, stretching forth his arms, he fixed his dying eyes upon me, while I leant forward to receive the first—the last embrace of an expiring brother. The effort tore open his wound afresh, and he sunk upon my shoulder:—a short convulsive

vulvise struggle preceded the parting groan of death, and, in another minute, he was lifeless.

C H A P. XLVII.

I RUSHED from the chamber, and descended to the parlour. The door was shut; I hastily opened it. Lady Aubrey had been compelled to quit the scene of horror, and the only object that met my eyes was the blackening corpse of Judith Blagden. She had expired in agonies which mocked the powers of description; every feature was distorted, every limb lacerated and broken. I turned away scarcely in my senses, and was darting through the outward room when I felt my arm grasped, and beheld, in the person who detained me, the host of the Black Lion, whom I once knew by the name of honest Ned. He entreated me to hear him for a single moment: - he informed me, that, involved in peril by his kindness to Edward Blagden, he had been obliged to quit his home, and to depend upon his bounty; that he had taken the name of Apprece the better to conceal himself; that he considered me as for ever banished from Glenowen for the indiscretions of my youth, and by the strong hatred of the family.

I interrupted the narrator, by asking who were the persons that nightly traversed the vicinity of the manor-house? He informed me, that, since my return, Mr. Blagden had been concealed in his habitation, hourly expecting my departure; that he met his mother every night at the grotto, to concert plans for the purpose of driving me again into exile. He also told me, that my wretched brother had determined never to destroy me, unless assaulted, and in his own defence. This last piece of information made me shrink with horror.

The host then assured me that my person was in no danger; that he had confirmed the suspicions of the country

country people of Mrs. Blagden and her son's attempt to poison Lady Aubrey ; that I endeavoured to secure the culprits, in order to consign them to the punishment of the laws ; and that the son perished by his own hands, while the affrighted mother failed in her attempt to escape from the window.

This report, which was indeed the truth, was credited by all ranks of people ; while the fatal secret, which Edward Blagden had reposed in my bosom, remained there, to agonise and sting it. I promised never to reveal what I knew of the misguided host,—and we parted.

I now hastened back to the manor-house, to take a last farewell of the distracted family. The sun had risen ; the morning hour was calm and brilliant ; but within my anguished bosom all was tempestuous darkness : the chearful skies seemed to mock the stormy conflicts of my soul, and at that moment the wildest tumult of elemental rage would have been congenial to my senses. I loathed existence ;—I began to hate my species. Could I think kindly of those who had never shewn me kindness ? Could I, so goaded by perpetual inhumanity, retain one particle of feeling, which might proclaim me human ? The world, to me, had been a scene of misery. I had been stung by those blind prejudices which poison society :—chilled by the scorn of empty pride,—and taunted by the perpetual menaces of poverty : what could be expected from a being whose heart was deadened by the unceasing pressure of affliction, but abhorrence and disgust ? It is easy for the fastidiousness of persecuting rigour, to deem the child of misery, whose affections are blighted, whose heart is writhing with despair, vindictive ; but reason and nature will proclaim the calumny ; the former will, while it blushes for the frailty of the human mind, confess its want of magic to restrain the force of indignation ; and the latter will consider resentment as a part of the gross compound

compound which forms, and the electric spirit which actuates the heart of man. There may be souls insensible to injuries, but they are also dead to the dignities of feeling.

It is impossible to describe my sensations as I contemplated the beautiful valley of Glenowen on my way to the manor-house:—that spot, where in my infant hours I had first known the sorrows of existence; where I had been taught by prejudice to place a shield before my heart, which repelled the generous attachment of the ill-fated Sidney. That spot, where the inexorable Judith first felt the gnawing pangs of jealousy, and nursed them into the hydra scorpions of revenge: where a father, forgetting the sanctity of moral precepts, yielded to the guidance of illicit passions; and—Oh! memory!—from the fevered source of thought yet spare one tear, while I repeat, where,—chilled by the cold neglect of pride and folly,—a dear mother perished! perished, as I have since learnt, through the machinations of that monster who alienated a sister's affections; and has, since that fatal moment, never ceased to persecute her devoted offspring.

On entering the manor-house I inquired after Sir Sidney; and was informed that the female servant who had been left to attend him during Lady Aubrey's absence, had told Lady Arabella, in my cousin's hearing, of all that had happened;—not without intimating that I was the murderer. To confirm her suspicions, my waistcoat, stained with blood, was produced in the chamber where the sufferer lay; the sight of it nearly deprived him of his senses, while it almost overwhelmed Lady Arabella with affliction. I hastened to the *boudoir*; the door which communicated with Sir Sidney's chamber was open, but I was forbid to enter. I then flew to Lady Aubrey's dressing-room, where I found her busied in reading and arranging various written papers: she was too deeply

ly absorbed in thought to notice my approach. There was a kind of stern and steady fortitude in her look and manner, that fixed my attention. I had been in the apartment some time, when she perceived me, or rather when she found a moment, abstracted from the deep attention of her thoughts: "Walsingham," said she, with a sigh which seemed to labour at her heart, "this is a day of dreadful wonders. The avenging arm of destiny has annihilated your enemies; and those whom it has pleased the great Disposer of events to spare, are bound to do you justice. From the eye of Omnipotence there are no secrets hidden! The crimes of hardened individuals, however they are successful for a time, will inevitably meet the tremendous blow of retribution. I am criminal, dreadfully criminal;—but I will lay open my heart, bleeding with contrition, before the tribunal of my Maker, and bow to the chastening scourge, till I have expiated my offences."

There was an awful sorrow in her tone and gesture, that made my blood almost freeze in every vein.—After a short pause, she continued:—

"This night, the secret of the cabinet shall be unfolded. You will then know, you will explore the source of that insatiable abhorrence, which uniformly actuated the mind of Mrs. Blagden; and through her pernicious influence steeled my breast against the claims of nature and humanity. Such is the tyranny of a malignant spirit, when once entrusted with domestic secrets;—and such the misery of those wretches, whose conduct places them in the power of fordid and revengeful fiends;—who, subtle in the magic of exploring the human mind, only become acquainted with its frailties, to shackle and command all its succeeding movements."

Her words seemed to collect all my senses, and blend them into that of hearing. I listened with an avidity that scarcely permitted me to breathe:—the
circulation

circulation at my heart, by turns, beat slow and quickened, as though the fountain of vitality would burst with expectation. Lady Aubrey observed my convulsive agitation; and, after pressing her hand for a moment upon her eyes, to repel the tears that started in defiance of her fortitude, she again addressed me.

"I conjure, I entreat you to be calm," said she; "this is not an hour for the frenzy of impetuous passions:—exhaust not the sensibility of your heart, in conflicts; nature will soon arouse your mind, to agonize and try your strength of resolution. The fate of Sidney,—the happiness of Colonel Aubrey,—your own,—will depend on the elucidation of this eventful epoch. Leave me to arrange my papers; I would not close my eyes, I would not sleep again with the torturing load which now bruises my guilty heart, to be mistress of the universe."

"Command,—and your will shall be obeyed," said I, while I felt an awful presentiment that was undescribable.

She hesitated a few moments. Her bosom seemed to shrink with horror, while her cheek displayed a transient flush of shame.

"I request that you will leave me," said she. "The business of this event will occupy my attention till the evening. I have committed my beloved Sidney to the care of Lady Arabella and Mr. Hanbury; and I trust that your assiduities will be united to theirs, while I perform the task which Heaven enjoins, and which must not be delayed."

While my aunt was speaking, a servant delivered a letter from Isabella. She merely glanced at the name, and then presented it to me. I read the following lines:—

"Chapflow.

"In a few hours, I shall be the wife of Lord Ken-carth. I have followed your counsel; and, notwithstanding

standing Walsingham's resolution to marry Lady Arabella, I yet trust and hope that Heaven will avert the blow, which would annihilate the dearest of mortals. Your resolution to unfold the mystery which has too long undermined your Sidney's repose, may restore to your breast that tranquillity, which can only be the result of conscious rectitude. Delay not a moment, I conjure you: reflect, that the happiness of one object, the prosperity of another, and the existence of a third, are events of too much importance to bear procrastination. The object of my choice, sensible of all his past indiscretions, will, I trust, by the fortune which Mr. Randolph has bequeathed to me, be enabled to enjoy those pure and rational delights which he never experienced in the vortex of dissipation. He is a repentant transgressor,—and the eye of contrition looks with hope, even to offended Heaven. Can the weakness of a mortal, then, refuse to pardon?

“When I reflect on the dreadful, the solemn oath which fear induced you to extort from Sidney, I tremble! Oh! absolve him by a confession,—a voluntary confession—snatch the beloved, the guiltless victim, from disgrace, lest the grave should yawn for revenge, and death demand a sacrifice which would make nature shudder.

“Farewell, my dear Lady Aubrey. Assure the suffering Sidney of my inviolable affection, and persuade the mistaken Walsingham to accept that friendship which has ever warmed my heart, and allowed him the name—the tender name of—brother. More, I never felt;—and less, I will not offer.

“I am hastening towards Bristol, where, with my brother's consent, and that of Lady Kencarth, I shall soon commence the duties of domestic attachment; and I trust, that the meek lustre of esteem will not be less grateful to a husband's feelings, because it will be heightened by the glow of fond affection.

“Once more farewell. Say all that is proper to
my

my brother;—every thing that is kind to the dear Sidney:—and add one more assurance of inviolable friendship to the generous, but misguided Walsingham.

“ ISABELLA.”

I returned the letter to Lady Aubrey, and hastened to my chamber, where I passed the remainder of the day till twilight. The variety of sorrows that divided my regrets,—the dreadful and recent events which awakened me to anguish, rendered the marriage of Isabella an affliction of less magnitude than it would have been at any other period. The fever of the mind, like that of the body, presents the greatest peril when it attacks us amidst the plenitude of enjoyment. I was woe-worn to the very acmé of despair: I had no hope, no palliating dream, to lull my senses;—they were wild with persecution, and armed, terribly armed, for the worst that could assail them.

As twilight advanced, I stole from my chamber to the *boudoir*. I found that Mr. Hanbury had been some time with Lady Aubrey. All was silent in Sir Sidney's apartment, and I concluded that he slept. I threw myself on a sofa, and waited in silent sorrow for his awaking. After I had passed near an hour in this still recess, with no light but that which a wood fire afforded, Lady Arabella gently opened the door of Sir Sidney's room, and requested that I would give her a phial of medicine which stood on the table. I poured it into a glass;—she received it from my hand, and Sir Sidney instantly swallowed it. Lady Arabella assured me that he was considerably tranquillized,—and again I flung myself on the sofa, to indulge my mournful ruminations, till the hour of awful disclosure. From time to time Lady Arabella stole to the door, which was a-jar, to inform me how much she thought my amiable cousin better. I had no senses but for expectation. Every nerve of
thought

thought was occupied to agony, and minutes seemed ages while they were lengthened by impatience.

C H A P. XLVIII.

AN hour after the close of day I received a summons to attend Lady Aubrey in her dressing-room. I flew almost with the swiftness of thought, and in a moment presented myself before her. Mr. Hanbury was already there, and his countenance bore marks of profound and mournful impressions. My aunt drew her chair towards the table, which was covered with a number of writings; she made a signal for me to take my seat, and Mr. Hanbury, with emphatic solemnity, began to read the last will of the deceased Sir Edward Aubrey. I shall not trouble you, Rosanna, with the tedious forms and repetitions of the law; but merely give you a brief abstract of this important paper.

At the time of Sir Edward's making his will Lady Aubrey was pregnant; he therefore bequeathed to the expected offspring, in case of its being a son, the extensive and rich domains of Glenowen, together with the manor-house, plate, furniture, pictures, and library; and the sum of sixty thousand pounds, to be paid when the said heir male should arrive at the age of twenty-one; with the farther sum of six thousand pounds *per annum* for the expences of the board, education, and travels of the said heir from the age of twelve to seventeen.

He also bequeathed eight thousand pounds to Walsingham Ainsforth, to be paid on his attaining the age of twenty-one: three hundred pounds *per annum* to be paid by Lady Aubrey for the education of the said Walsingham Ainsforth, from the age of nine years to that of seventeen.

To Judith Blagden, in consideration of her services to Sir Edward's deceased mother, and her attachment to Frances Lady Aubrey, the sum of three

thousand pounds : but, in case of the death of Walsingham Ainsforth, a farther sum of two thousand pounds, to be paid within one month after his decease.

In case the offspring of Lady Aubrey should be a female, the estate of Glenowen and all the appurtenances thereunto belonging, devolving on Sir Edward's brother Colonel Aubrey, he bequeathed the sum of thirty thousand pounds to the said daughter, to be paid on her attaining her eighteenth year, with three hundred pounds annually for board and education. The legacy to Walsingham Ainsforth to be twenty thousand pounds, and that to Mrs. Blagden one thousand only. The remainder, deducting Lady Aubrey's marriage-settlement of twelve hundred pounds *per annum*, to go with the estate to Colonel Aubrey and his heirs for ever.

I heard the will read to the last line without the smallest emotion : the petty fraud which had robbed me of the sum allowed for my education, could not awaken a sentiment of regret in a bosom so deeply wounded, or a mind so habituated to all the dreadful varieties of sorrow. Mr. Hanbury folded the paper : his hand trembled, and the paleness of death stole over Lady Aubrey's features.

" Now, Walsingham," said she, " prepare to hear the fatal secret of my soul ; prepare to execrate a wretch, whose life has been devoted to avarice and deception."

The agitation which shook her frame, made her tongue falter—she paused.

" Oh, madam !" said I, " do not, do not hesitate to unfold this momentous mystery. There is nothing material in Sir Edward's will—nothing but what *I* can forgive, and *I* alone am injured."

She struggled with the anguish of her mind, and with a desperate resolution exclaimed—" Hear, hear it then, Walsingham, and let the agonizing confession touch

touch your heart to pity—I have no son ! the wretched, the ill-fated Sidney is my daughter !”

I shrunk almost to annihilation—the powers of language failed to express the astonishment that possessed my mind.

“ Yes, Walsingham,” continued Lady Aubrey, “ that persecuted angel, whose romantic, whose invincible attachment to you has involved her in so many sorrows, is my daughter—the daughter of Sir Edward Aubrey.”

“ Almighty God ! support, sustain my soul under this new trial of its faculties !” said I. “ This is, indeed, an hour of wonders ! All that has passed now rushes on my memory in proof of what you have disclosed. What a fool—what a blind, thoughtless fool have I been !—How unworthily, how barbarously have I repaid this heroic attachment ! Oh ! let me hasten to implore forgiveness—let me, at the feet of the generous Sidney, breathe forth the anguish of compunction.”

“ Tranquillize your mind,” said Mr. Hanbury, interrupting me, “ and recollect that you have many moments yet to come, which will require considerable address, and no less delicacy. The amiable Sidney is not prepared for this disclosure, which has been hastened by the death of Mrs. Blagden. Bound by a solemn oath, before she quitted Switzerland, your amiable cousin engaged herself never to declare her sex during the lifetime of Lady Aubrey, without her free permission. The origin of her disguise was Mrs. Blagden’s avarice, and her hatred of you as the son of her detested rival. Thus we see the dreadful effects of that treachery in our sex, which too often arms the female mind against the sensibilities of pity ; while it urges the deluded victim on to every species of depravity. The amiable Sidney has been educated in masculine habits ; but every affection of her heart is beautifully feminine ; heroic though tender ; and

constant, though almost hopeless. She will, nevertheless, demand some time to fashion her manners to the graces of her sex. For your sake, Walsingham, she has endured many months of perpetual inquietude; her machinations to prevent your forming a matrimonial alliance were prompted by that passion which subdued the voice of reason, and, the fastidious will say, violated the laws of strict propriety. Yet, let it be remembered, that her virtues, her sensibilities, were her own;—her crime, if the concealment of her sex can be considered criminal, was Lady Aubrey's."

My aunt now ventured a few words as a feeble extenuation of her conduct.—"I have been the dupe of an inhuman persecuting wretch," said she, bursting into tears. "Shortly after my sister's marriage with Arthur Ainsforth, Mrs. Blagden, in confidence, revealed the story of her seduction. I heard and pitied her. The offspring of her credulity was placed at nurse as her nephew; and though I lamented my sister's alliance with your father, I still forbore to wound her bosom with the knowledge of his unworthiness. At the time of Sidney's birth, my mind was agitated by hope and fear. The extraordinary will of Sir Edward held out a strong temptation to that avarice which has ever been a prominent feature of my mind. Mrs. Blagden availed herself of this despicable passion, and suggested the idea of concealing the sex of the infant Sidney. I acquiesced; from that fatal moment I was the slave of her dominion. We travelled from place to place on the Continent, ever alarmed, and perpetually in danger of discovery. After many years had passed, the dread of Colonel Aubrey's just resentment confirmed the fatal fraud; and nothing but the death of my detested tyrant could have unveiled the mystery, or restored to happiness the suffering, devoted Sidney."

" All

"All-seeing heaven!" exclaimed I, "how blind, how misguided is the human heart! All the trifling crowds of women appear as shadows of the sex, when compared with this transcendent, this unequalled Sidney. Why, why have I so long been deprived of such a pure and generous friend?"

"The name of friend is too chilling for such a bosom as your cousin's," interrupted Mr. Hanbury. "The hour will shortly arrive when you must allow her a dearer title, or avoid her society for ever; for that affection which was sustained by hope, would, if rejected, terminate in despair. All that has passed must be buried in oblivion. Colonel Aubrey is now lord of Glenowen.—Your aunt and the amiable Sidney, if it should please Heaven to restore her, will return to Switzerland—time will, I trust, reconcile them to Colonel Aubrey."

"Is there an act of kindness or generosity which may not be expected from Colonel Aubrey?" said I. "Can so benignant, so liberal a heart be closed against such a sufferer as the heroic Sidney? He knows how strongly she was interested in his favour—How often her heart has been agonised by the fatal secret! He has heard the innocent, the indignant child pleading at the feet of her misguided mother—pleading for him—for me—for the rectitude of her bosom—the virtues and the wrongs of her neglected uncle."

Lady Aubrey hid her face on Mr. Hanbury's arm, and shuddered.

"Spare me, Oh, Walsingham! I conjure you to spare me," said she; "I am already tortured by compunction—Do not suppress the energies of awakened truth, by the anguish of despair. Let me, let me live to expiate my offences."

As she spoke, Lady Arabella rushed into the room; her countenance evinced the horrors of her mind,

while she scarcely articulated — “ Oh, Lady Aubrey ! Sidney — the dear, dear Sidney is dying.”

“ Rosanna, I must be brief, or the pang that wrings my heart will arrest my pen. — Here description fails — the poignancy of anguish mocks the feeble power of words, and the hand that has traced the sorrows of my life, is convulsed with agitation. The tear, the groan of torture could no longer relieve the burning anguish of my heart. My brain seemed to shrink — my limbs to petrify — while Lady Arabella disclosed the dreadful event.

I — I had destroyed the amiable Sidney.

The drug which I had given her was laudanum — the contents of the phial which I had purchased for my own destruction, and which had been incautiously left upon the table in her *boudoir*. The distracted state of my mind at the moment when I delivered the pernicious potion to Lady Arabella’s hand, occasioned the terrible mistake. I was hopeless — wild — distracted.

I hastened to the chamber, and, throwing myself beside her bed, pressed the dear, senseless, persecuted Sidney to my tortured bosom — Mr. Hanbury would have torn me from her ; but the frenzy of my soul gave strength to every artery in my severed frame, and I could at that moment have encountered a lion’s fury.

My despair at length became ungovernable. Again I snatched the dear victim of inexorable fate to my palpitating heart : — she breathed. I kissed her cold and livid cheek, and, exhausted by the agonies of my soul, fell senseless beside her.

Fearing the consequences that might await this dreadful event, Mr. Hanbury had me instantly removed to the parsonage. I was led by two domestics. The bleak blast from the mountains reanimated my senses, and awakened my aching memory to an accumulation of anguish. Oh, Rosanna ! what an age

age of misery was comprised in that short hour ! The bosom of Nature trembled at the violation of her laws. The wind seemed to rock the stupendous mountains, while my tortured groans were lost amidst its howlings.

At day-break a chaise was procured, and I, in compliance with Mr. Hanbury's entreaties, set out with the faithful Andrew for London. On my arrival, I repaired to my friend Mr. Optic, in whose sympathising breast I confided the fatal secret. After conjuring him to take charge of my affairs,—to secure an annuity of three hundred pounds on old Andrew, and one of the same sum on Griffith Blagden, I departed for Dover. A packet-boat was ready to sail for Ostend. I embarked. I committed myself to the precarious element, a hopeless, lost, forlorn, despairing exile !

Such, Rosanna, such is the distracted mortal whom your gentle nature pities; the being who, while his hand concludes the dreadful detail of unexampled sorrows, looks forward with a mournful smile of resignation to that grave which opens to receive him: for, to these eyes, the sun may rise and set, and rise again, without displaying one animated prospect, one spot on this vast globe, which is not overshadowed by despair.

I go—benignant child of pity, to that dark and silent home, where my wasting withering heart will find repose which this unfeeling world denied it. Remember, amiable Rosanna, remember the victim of deception,—the ill-fated—the persecuted Walsingham !—and, Oh ! mild and soothing spirit of benevolence ! when you again peruse my melancholy story, let pity draw a veil over the darkest shades, and let the softer tints be, for once, irradiated by the un sullied tear of sacred sympathy.

WALSING-

WALSINGHAM to ROSANNA.

Luxemburg, March 22, 1792.

" I depart this instant for Switzerland. Ah, Rosanna! Sidney Aubrey lives! the poison of the pernicious drug was counteracted, and I fly,—to expiate my crime—to idolize her virtues.

" Farewel, sweet and enlightened friend!—soother of pain—and monitress of reason—farewel. I am wild with the agony of joy:—it is an inexplicable sensation:—the soul which is not finely organized can never know it. Ah, Rosanna! may you never experience those sorrows, the reverse of which, alone, can draw it into action.

" Farewel; once more farewel.

" W. A."

*The Same to the Same.**Glenowen, August 27, 1791.*

" This day has overpaid me ten-fold for all the anguish I have hitherto experienced. The stormy scene, I trust, is past for ever; and the brightening prospect at length soothes my mind, almost exhausted by perpetual persecution. The prejudices of early infancy, originating in the most barbarous deception, are completely counteracted by the virtues, the heroic virtues of my transcendent Sidney! Indeed, so completely is she changed, so purely gentle, so feminine in manners; while her mind still retains the energy of that richly-treasured dignity of feeling which are the effects of a masculine education, that I do not lament past sorrows, while my heart triumphs, nobly triumphs in the felicity of present moments.

" Colonel Aubrey, soon after my departure from Glenowen, surrendered himself on the charge of Lord Linbourne's death, and was acquitted by the laws of equity

equity and honour. He has sanctioned my alliance with the amiable Sidney :—he has received with open arms the offending Lady Aubrey,—and he has blest her children with the affection of a father.

“ My worthy friend Mr. Optic, whose genuine excellence of heart is almost unexampled, on the embarrassment of Lord Kencarth’s finances, sheltered and supported the venerable Griffith, till the annuity which I requested him to purchase could be completely secured. The good old sailor is now, unconscious of his daughter’s criminality, settled in Glamorganshire. The fortune which Mrs. Blagden left, has, by Colonel Aubrey’s commands, been distributed among her indigent relations. Is not this the perfection of philanthropy ? Does it not prove the generosity of that noble disinterested nature, which has uniformly characterised the most liberal of mortals ?

“ Lady Arabella is become the sober wife of Walter Hanbury ; and the honest Andrew is as great “ a laird as any o’ his clan, in the Highlands of Scotland.” You must remember that, in my opinion, *greatness* consists in VIRTUE !

“ This letter will be delivered to you by the Duchess of Heartwing, who, abandoned by her dissipated lord, retires on a separate maintenance of six hundred pounds *per annum* to her native country, after passing a few weeks at Spa for the benefit of the waters. Mr. Optic, with my friend Kencarth, and his amiable Isabella, are here, to witness my felicity :—the viscount, a repentant rover, and his gentle amiable monitress, the happy origin of a reformation which graces her power, and evinces his understanding.

“ Now, Rosanna, retired from the busy varying scenes of noise and folly, I leave those trifling vicious reptiles whom you have met with during the progress of my disastrous story, to the infamy that will mark their names, till fate consigns them to oblivion. I have held them up as beacons, to warn the unwary :
I have

I have portrayed them, as they are ; neither with a flattering nor a distorting pencil. If they continue to triumph over the children of worth and genius, it will only prove that, in this undefinable sphere, where the best and wisest cannot hope for happiness, the *demons of art* are permitted to oppress with wrongs, while they lift the empty brow of arrogance and pride above the illustrious pupils of GENIUS, TRUTH, and NATURE ! !

“ Amiable Rosanna ! benign and gentle patroness of sorrow and of virtue ! whose example cheers the good, and whose pity soothes the unhappy, accept my grateful friendship,—and farewell.

“ WALSINGHAM AINSFORTH.”

THE END.



